GAS-LIGHT

VOLUME TWO NUMBER TEN

"The Dance of Life" - circa 1972 by R. Crumb

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE
OF THE CLEVELAND GRAPHIC
ARTS SOCIETY

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DEATH IS A DREAM

(STARRING YOU, READER, AS DEATH.)

AFTER A SERIES OF INCREDIBLE ADVENTURES AND BRUSHES WITH DEATH, I AM MADE THE CHAMPION OF THOSE WHO PEOPLE THIS EXOTIC DREAM-WORLD. WITH ALL THE... AH... PRIVILEGES ACCORDED SUCH A STATION.

AS TIM
I COM
REALIZA
NO PHYS
CAN CO

I HAVE SUCH A FAMILIARITY WITH THESE EXPERIENCES. THE FEELING OF DEJA VU IS OVERWHELMING.

AND WHEN ENOUGH
JOG MY MEMORY, I
I WILL DIE, BUT I

PETER KUPER AND SETH TOBOCMAN.

IT ALWAYS STARTS THIS WAY. I WAKEN FROM DARKNESS TO A PLACE I CANNOT REMEMBER.
E PASSES
E TO THE
TION THAT
SICAL HARM
ME TO ME.
ALL IS IDYLLIC. IN COMBAT SO UNEQUAL AS TO BE RIDICULOUS, I UNFAILINGLY EMERGE VICTORIOUS.
HAS OCCURRED TO
KNOW THE TRUTH:
WILL LIVE AGAIN!
TO THINK THAT AFTER ALL I HAVE BEEN THROUGH, AS SOON AS YOU'RE DONE READING THIS FANTASY WHICH IS MY LIFE, YOU'LL END IT!
FOR ME...
YOU ARE DEATH!
END

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BILL EVERETT

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G.A.S.LITE 10 is a G.A.S. publication.Prepublication price is $1.00.After publication,$1.50.

SEND ORDERS TO:G.A.S.LITE 2265 Delaware dr. Cleveland Hts. Ohio 44106

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JACK KIRBY

INTERVIEW

Q. Could you repeat for the readers the symbolism of The Hulk?
A. The Hulk--when he is The Hulk--is the epitome of ignorance and therefore unstoppable, because ignorance combined with power is unstoppable. He represents everything that is primitive and that's why he is the way he is, and is so hard to contend with. A cave man endowed with superhero powers is unstoppable and becomes overwhelming. When he is Dr. Banner he's entirely different. He is a disciplined man, well-educated and under control.

Q. And without much power?
A. Well, he's got power in his knowledge. That's symbolic of all of us, because when we're out of control we're all capable of doing as much damage as The Hulk.

Q. Could you give us a brief run-down on your career in comics?
A. I began probably with the kind of stuff that needed improvement and over the years it got improvement because I worked at it and, of course, today I still see avenues where my art can be either changed or improved.

Q. What single character is your favorite?
A. All of them, because when I work on a character, each character is important to me. I try to make them as dimensional as possible. It's not an ego trip; it's just my responsibility to see that I don't give the reader caricatures.

Q. Where does most of the influence come from in your art...such as style?
A. The style is your own to begin with if you have no formal schooling in art. You know, you swipe and you cannibalize and you take the best of a lot of the other artists and they become your school--they become your influence; but the style that develops is your own.

BEST WISHES
FROM
MARK MOONRIDER
JACK KIRBY—

BUT YOU'VE HEARD THE STORIES YOURSELF! ---AN ARMY OF PHANTOMS MOVING THROUGH THE FOREST AT NIGHT!
IF THE PHANTOMS HAVE COME HERE, THEY HAVEN'T SHOWN THEMSELVES!
WHAT INTERESTS ME IS THE WHEREABOUTS OF THE TWO HORSEMEN SEEN RIDING IN THIS DIRECTION!
I SAW THEM! --- A YOUNG STRANGER--- AND HIS COMPANION! --- A HUGE STONE-FACED GIANT!
SUDDENLY!
LOOK-!
I THINK WE'VE FOUND THE COMPANION! ---AND IT SEEMS THAT OTHERS HAVE FOUND HIM, TOO!
TURN HIM OVER! I-I WANT TO SEE HIS FACE!
SAINTS SAVE US! HE'S ONE OF THE "UNLIVING!" ---THE STATUES THAT WALK!!
IF THIS THING WALKED--- IT WAS STOPPED BY WHOEVER USED THESE STRANGE FORKED WEAPONS!

Q. Was there anyone who influenced your writing?
A. There wasn't a certain writer - just my experience of writers--all sorts of writers. I combined whatever I learned from them with my own sense of drama. Each person has his own sense of drama. I could be passionate drama or sometimes it could be very cool drama. I feel that extreme drama will make a larger impact on the reader.

Q. What do you have planned for the future?
A. Anything that's assigned to me by D.C.

Q. Are there any new concepts that you will be bringing up, or new characters? Such as...
A. I'm not going to give you "such as" because I would be giving away my ideas. I can only say that I am entertaining a variety of ideas which I will submit to the proper people and see what they think of them.

Q. What, if any, is the symbolism of Galactus and the Silver Surfer?
A. Galactus is an overwhelming force; an energetic, overwhelming force which I believe we all have to contend with from time to time; a force we can't control. He represents a force as strong as a hurricane or a natural disaster of some kind, like a landslide or a cyclone. Those are forces that we can't predict or control. They just come and if we're in their path we can get hurt and if we're not in their path we can only watch them and just wonder at the bigness of them. Galactus represents that kind of thing. In the instance of the Fantastic Four, the Fantastic Four represented the challenge to Man to stand against those forces, like Galactus.

Q. Do you have a favorite inker?
A. No, they are all my favorites, because they represent a variety of styles which I like to see on my work.

Q. Do you pick up most of the comics that come out on the stands?
A. Not really. No. Being a pro, I receive comics from time to time. I haven't got time to go out and browse through the newsstands, so I collect what comics are sent to me and I keep those.

Q. What do you think of Steve Ditko's Mr. A?
A. I like anything Steve does. Steve is a very creative person and I respect him as an individual and I expect anything good from Steve.

Q. Do you intend to have in "The Demon" any of the regular other D.C. characters like you had in the 'New Gods?"
A. Anything can happen in a comic strip and we can bring in any kind of a character if we think that it would make a commercially good story, so characters can come from any corner. They can come from the Gods, they can come from adventure characters, or certainly from traditional D.C. characters.

Q. What exactly is Big Barda? Is there any symbolism behind it?
A. Well, I think Big Barda represents a woman to me...all women. And, of course, I was raised among women like Big Barda, large women, warm women. And despite the bigness of their size, they're very feminine, and a man can regard them with respect, which I do.

Q. It has been said that you like drawing buildings and rocks and huge cities and structures.

A. It's not the main thing I enjoy doing, but it represents something I know very well, and that's the city.

Q. Where did you pick up this technique of the super buildings?

A. I'm basically a city boy and have lived in the city all my life, and certainly the first thing I know about is a building, because it's one of the first things I saw when I hit the street as a child. I'm quite sure that if you had to draw a building, you'd do it very well if you were a city boy.

Q. What do you think of Neal Adams' art work?

A. I think Neal is a fine artist. He is an artist in an illustrative sense -- a fine illustrator.

Q. What do you think of Denny O'Neil's relevance in Green Lantern and Green Arrow?

A. Gee, I think Denny O'Neil is a good writer and he can handle a subject well.

Q. What do you have to say about the new young group of artists coming into comics now?

A. New artists coming in or who really want to get in should be encouraged and given avenues of opportunity where they can make some headway in comics. I think what comics need is a variety of new writing styles, new drawing styles, new thinking styles, and anybody who wants to do comcis I think should be able to do them.

Q. How many pages do you do a day?

A. I do three comfortably.

Q. Alex Toth has said that the publishers are putting too many restrictions on the artists and writers. Do you think this is true?

A. I wouldn't like to make a comment about organizational structure because I believe that this kind of thing should be thrashed out among the professionals themselves and certainly not discussed with the fans, so if there are any areas of conflict I believe it's between whoever is really involved professionally.

Q. What do you think of the comics code?

A. I think it is very flexible and very fair and certainly more reasonable these days.

Q. Have you ever had trouble with it in your earlier days or now?

A. I think everybody did, because when you first devise something in response to a reaction, it gets severe and then begins to lessen.

Q. Could you repeat what you said yesterday about your Gods?

A. To put it short, the Gods are giant reflections of ourselves. They are ourselves as we think we should be or we think we might be. They are idealistic and dramatic versions. They make a lot more noise than we so and therefore attract a lot more attention than we do. We feel that we've been fulfilled in some way if our own images act out the fantasies that we entertain.

Q. Is it true that Jim Steranko and Mr. Miracle are one and the same?
A. Let me say that some of Jim Steranko is in Mr. Miracle, but not all because Mr. Miracle has a mystic tie-up which has nothing to do with real people. Jim Steranko was a good escape artist before he became an artist. He is certainly a fine entertainer and what he says is true. I did discuss that I had an idea that was similar to what he had done and certainly Jim Steranko being part of my experience was a part of the idea.

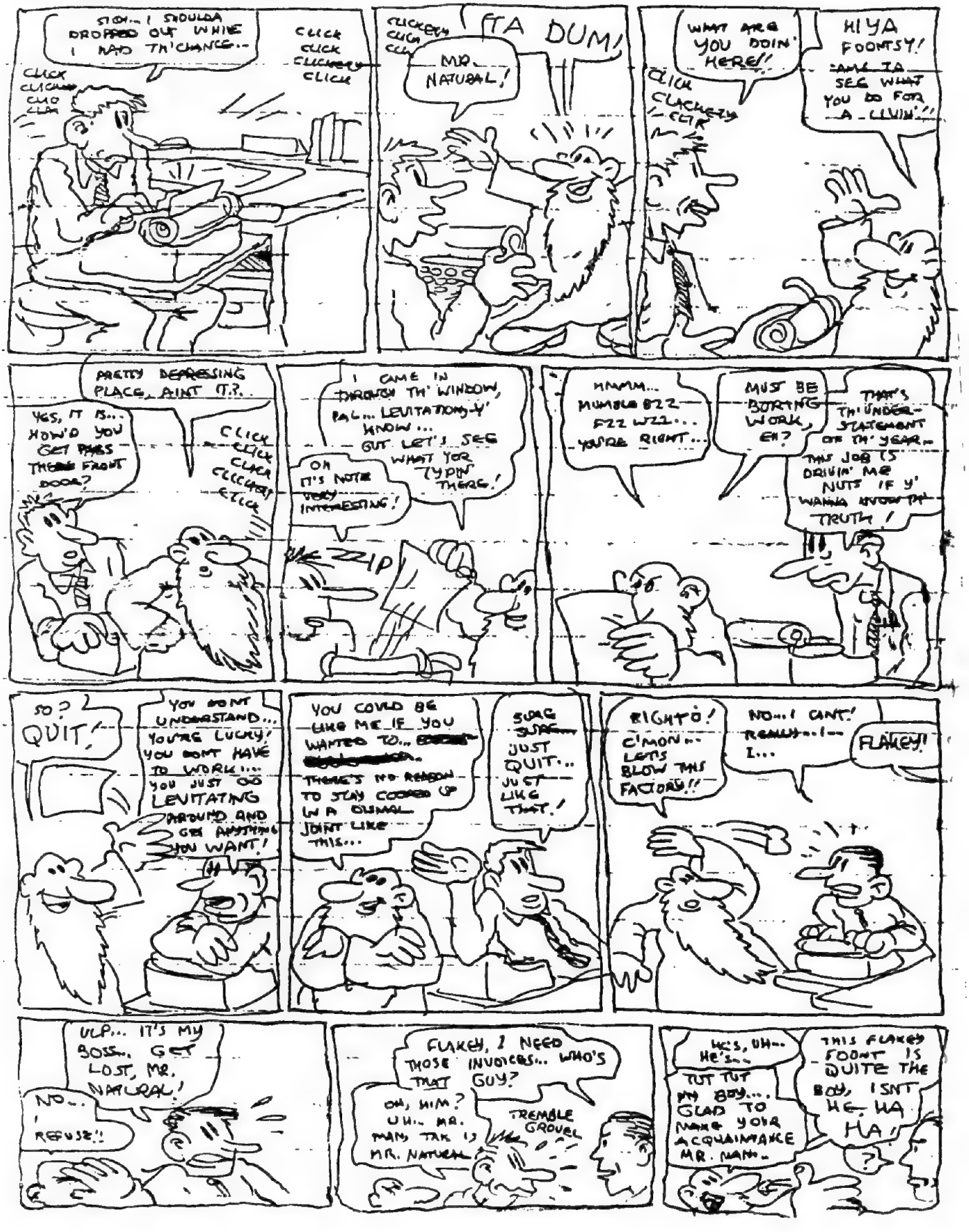
Q. How many years have you been in comics?
A. Probably close to 35.

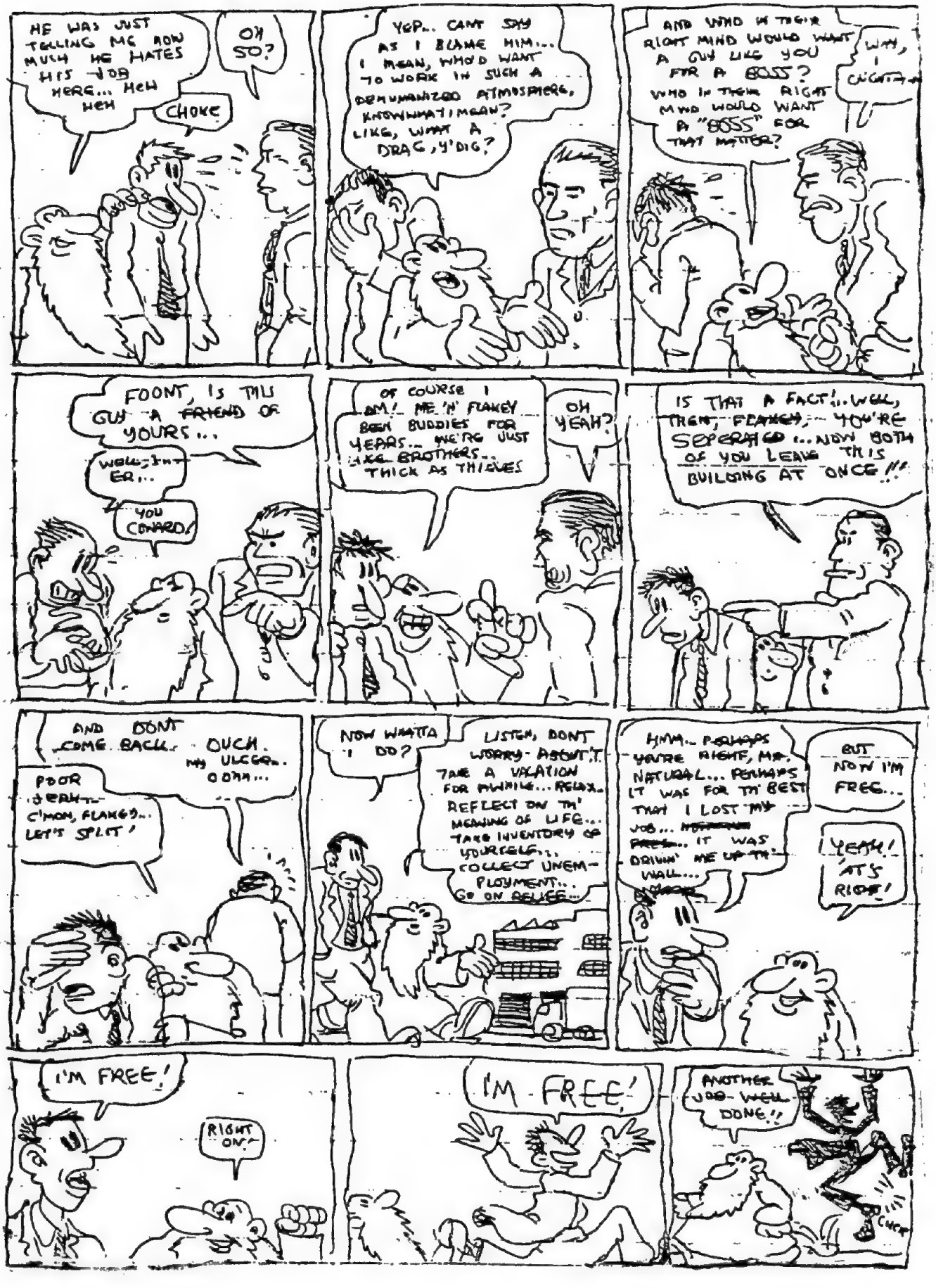
Q. What is the symbolism behind Orion?
A. Orion is you. Orion is people who are not good, who are not evil, but have the potential for both and when they exercise both they get a reaction and have to take the risks for what they do or say. Orion does, too. He is tormented by his own potential for savagery, by his own potential for goodness.

Q. Is there anything you would like to say to finish off this interview?
A. I thank you guys for your interest. And if you represent a group or a club, I thank them for their interest. I'd like to say hello to anyone who reads what we had to say here, and I hope their interest in comics keeps up. I'd like them to know that every professional who works in comics is only trying to do his best to entertain them and give them their twenty cents worth (or whatever a comic costs). That's all.

THANK YOU JACK!

FLAKEY FOONT on the job


STOP.. I SHOULDA DROPPED OUT WHILE I HAD TH'CHANCE..
CLICK CLICK CLICKETY CLICK
CLICK CLICKETY CLICK CLICK
CLICKETY CLICK CLI
TA DUM!
MR. NATURAL!
WHAT ARE YOU DOIN' HERE!
HIYA FOONTSY! LAME IA SEE WHAT YOU DO FOR A LIVIN'!
CLICK CLACKETY CLICK
PRETTY DEPRESSING PLACE, AINT IT?
YES, IT IS... HOW'D YOU GET PAST THE FRONT DOOR?
CLICK CLICK CLACK CLICKETY CLICK
I CAME IN THROUGH TH' WINDOW, PAL... LEVITATION-Y' KNOW... BUT LET'S SEE WHAT YOR TYPIN' THERE!
OH IT'S NOTHIN' VERY INTERESTING!
ZIP
HNMM... MUMBLE BZZ FZZ WZZ... YOU'RE RIGHT...
MUST BE BORING WORK, EH?
THAT'S TH' UNDER-STATEMENT OF TH' YEAR... THIS JOB IS DRIVIN' ME NUTS IF Y' WANNA KNOW TH' TRUTH!
SO? QUIT!
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND... YOU'RE LUCKY! YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORK!... YOU JUST GO LEVITATING AROUND AND GET ANYTHING YOU WANT!
YOU COULD BE LIKE ME IF YOU WANTED TO... [redacted] THERE'S NO REASON TO STAY COOPED UP IN A CRIMINAL JOINT LIKE THIS...
SURE JUST QUIT... JUST LIKE THAT!
RIGHTO! C'MON... LET'S BLOW THIS FACTORY!!
NO..! CAN'T! REALLY..! I...
FLAKEY!
YELP... IT'S MY BOSS.. GET LOST, MR. NATURAL!
NO.. I REFUSE!!
FLAKEY, I NEED THOSE INVOICES... WHO'S THAT GUY?
OH, HIM? UH.. MR. MAN TAK IS MR. NATURAL
TREMBLE GROVEL
HE'S, UH.. HE'S..
TUT TUT MY BOY... GLAD TO MAKE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE MR. NAN..
THIS FLAKEY FOONT IS QUITE THE BOY, ISN'T HE HA HA!
?


HE WAS JUST TELLING ME HOW MUCH HE HATES HIS JOB HERE... HEH HEH
CHOKE
OH SO?
YEP... CAN'T SAY AS I BLAME HIM... I MEAN, WHO'D WANT TO WORK IN SUCH A DEHUMANIZED ATMOSPHERE, KNOWWHAT I MEAN? LIKE, WHAT A DRAG, Y'DIG?
AND WHO IN THEIR RIGHT MIND WOULD WANT A GUY LIKE YOU FOR A BOSS? WHO IN THEIR RIGHT MIND WOULD WANT A "BOSS" FOR THAT MATTER?
WHY, I OUGHTA--
FOONT, IS THIS GUY A FRIEND OF YOURS...
WELL; I'M-ER...
YOU COWARD!
OF COURSE I AM! ME 'N' FLAKEY BEEN BUDDIES FOR YEARS... WE'RE JUST LIKE BROTHERS... THICK AS THIEVES
OH YEAH?
IS THAT A FACT!.. WELL, THEN, FLAKEY, -- YOU'RE SEPERATED .. NOW BOTH OF YOU LEAVE THIS BUILDING AT ONCE!!
AND DON'T COME BACK!
OUCH. MY ULCER.. OOHH...
POOR PERM-- C'MON, FLAKEY.. LET'S SPLIT!
NOW WHATTA I DO?
LISTEN, DON'T WORRY- ABOUT IT. TAKE A VACATION FOR AWHILE... RELAX. REFLECT ON TH' MEANING OF LIFE... TAKE INVENTORY OF YOURSELF... COLLECT UNEMPLOYMENT... GO ON RELIEF...
HMM... PERHAPS YOU'RE RIGHT, MR. NATURAL... PERHAPS IT WAS FOR TH' BEST THAT I LOST MY JOB... [illegible] FREE... IT WAS DRIVIN' ME UP TH' WALL... [illegible]
BUT NOW I'M FREE...
YEAH! AT'S RIGHT!
I'M FREE!
RIGHT ON!
I'M FREE!
ANOTHER JOB WELL DONE!!
CHEK

DICK GIORDANO
SPEAKS OUT!
an interview

G.A.S.: Could you give us an informal background on your schooling as far as artistry goes, and where you were raised and stuff like that?

DICK: Okay. I was born and raised in New York, born in July of 1932, a little quick arithmetic makes me 40 this year. I went to the School of Industrial Arts in New York between the years of 1946 and 1950. I think I graduated in 1950. The School of Industrial Arts was a public highschool. In New York City that had a full curriculum of art studies plus a full curriculum of academic studies, so that when you were finished with the course, you'd go on to college. If you desired, your academic credits would have been there and over course of the four years that we were there, we spent two years taking ten-week courses in everything. By everything, I mean Jewelry Design and Fashion Illustration just to see if we were suited for things other than we thought we were. I thought it was a pretty good course. They taught us about reproduction methods and so forth, though after a few years, we specialized. My specialization was Advertising and Illustration, which didn't at all prepare me for a career in cartooning, but I'd always done comics on my own. When I got out of high school in 1950, I went to work within a few months for Jerry Iger, who was originally connected with Eisner. Eisner and Iger did sort of a comic book factory bit a few years, and I started off erasing pages and eventually worked my way up to inking backgrounds within the course of the year, uh, nine months really after I started at Igers I started doing freelance art for Charlton Comics and I've been pretty much in that bag since then. I believe the, uh, the first of the year in fifty two is when, uh, I thought of free lancing and I've been doing it ever since.

G.A.S.: As the editor of Charlton, how can you explain the demise of Charlton, that is, in the superhero line, in the simplest terms.

DICK: In the simplest terms possible is that they didn't sell. You wanna ask me why that's, you know, there is really no way . . .

G.A.S.: Wasn't there a matter of distribution? Because you could hardly find them anywhere.

DICK: Well, distribution was a problem at Charlton and is certainly a problem with National and Marvel right now. The distribution

has always been a major problem, however, Charlton Comics at that time, the distribution problem was over its entire line and if you couldn't find Blue Beetle, you couldn't find First Love either. Yet the love magazines were selling 40 to 50 percent and one of the Blue Beetles sold a horrendous figure of eighteen percent.

G.A.S.: Was that the last one put out which was on the shelf for a long time, because I remember it was a relevancy type of thing?

DICK: That was one of the early issues. By the time the sales reports on the last of the super heroes came in I was no longer over there so I don't know how those sold. I started losing interest in the Charlton line when I saw that that particular line, the super hero line, wasn't going anywhere. I was deeply involved in that line personally.

G.A.S.: When you went to National, what was your first assignment? Did they immediately assign you as an editor?

DICK: Yeah, I was hired as an editor, rather secretly for some reason; we sort of met behind closed doors for three or four months before the announcement was made. My first assignments were, y'know, one editorial of course, and y'know what titles they were. They asked me what ideas I had, while we were talking about it of course, for Aquaman, they asked me what I might wanna do with Blackhawks and Teen Titans, they told me about Secret Six at that point. At the time we were talking the first issue of Secret Six hadn't been done yet. Y'know, hadn't been finished yet, so all they could do was tell me about it. I started it with the second issue. I didn't do the first.

G.A.S.: You were the editor of Secret Six?!

DICK: Yeah.

G.A.S.: Well could you tell us all who Mocking Bird was?

DICK: No. I haven't the faintest idea.

G.A.S.: Oh, Wow!

DICK: Everybody asks that question. It's wonderful! To see that people are interested in something like that. Uh, I got it after the first issue. I knew what their premise was. I knew what they had in mind when they started it and I had a choice; I could have, at that point, decided in my mind who Mockingbird was, and started working on that premise, or I could just ignore it all along. I just ignored it for a very good reason. I was afraid that if I knew who Mockingbird was, and if the writer did, we would unconsciously tip it off. If we had knowledge of it, we'd be working toward that way. We would keep him out of a

scene where he shouldn't be in and so forth. We thought it better to not know just as the reader didn't know and as the members of the group didn't know so that we wouldn't, uh, without wanting to, tip it off. Unfortunately we did the reverse. We started excluding certain people from being Mockingbird--accidentally, none of them were intentional. I have to say that they were all accidents; they were all blunders. I think we only tipped off two of them or three of them, I'm not sure. But we narrowed it down without meaning to and I kinda felt that if we had narrowed it down to the one person, we would then start being careful to keep it consistent that one person was it. But we never had the opportunity to go that far, so I didn't have to worry about it. We just cut it off. There really was no Mockingbird as far as I was concerned. A little aside: we had considered after Secret Six was, just talk this was, just talk, talking in the coffee room kinda stuff, we kind of considered taking Mockingbird, trying to figure out from what was left, who Mockingbird might be and have that be a guiding force between a lot of the things that were happening at National. We were hoping to do something about getting the Doom Patrol back because of Mockingbird. About working the Teen Titans through Jupiter. That Jupiter hokeyness was gonna lead back to Mockingbird.

G.A.S.: That would be good!

DICK: Yeah. We had a whole magilla worked out there but they kept dropping books. There was really no place for us to fit the think in anymore. It was just moving around. The Jupiter thing in itself was hokey but if it led back to Mockingbird, it would work pretty good. We talked about it. We had a couple of writers in on it. We had some ideas cooking but never got it off the ground.

G.A.S.: Could you make a comment on the tremendous change in Teen Titans, because many people questioned the wisdom and success of that move?

DICK: Let me say this. I don't like changing characters like that. For one reason, to my way of thinking, it should indicate to everyone who reads this stuff, that the reason why we're making changes in scrambling is because the sales are going down on the book. Nobody fools around with a book that's selling! Guaranteed baby! If somebody starts fooling around with the book, it means sales have gone down. Gone down to the danger point! Or you wouldn't start fooling around with the character. We fooled around with Green Lantern and Green Arrow because Green Lantern is bombing. Y'know, I mean it wasn't done because we said "Hey we're gonna do a great new thing; it's selling well the way it is, but we're gonna do something different." The reason they went into relevancy was because Green Lantern wasn't selling. The reason I made the change on Teen Titans was because the old one wasn't selling. We sat around talking about it. We couldn't

come up with anything we really liked. We didn't really like the changes that we came up with, but we thought we should try something. At the time, I have to admit, I was more enthusiastic about it than I am now looking back at it.

I never was a costume freak. I never was a super power freak. If you will remember back to Charlton, none of those guys had the super power that National characters generally had. I'd like to stay away from that and get into characterization a little more. You may not like the question, but you knew what he stood for.

G.A.S.: Oooooohh yes!

DICK: Well, look! There's something to be said for that. He was a person, y'know. He may not be one that you like, but he was a real people compared to two-dimensional type super heroes who depended on some God-given super power to accomplish things and the writer wasn't required to give him a personality or a character. So, y'know, it's, so when the opportunity came to change the Teen Titans, my first thought is always get rid of their powers and make people out of them, y'know. Make it possible for them to get hurt so they can think about those things and react to situations that they couldn't, didn't react to before. I always felt it was like a little unfair, I read Superman comics when I was a kid, and I knew he was gonna win when I bought it. Because he was invincible, there was no way that Superman could be beaten. That's why they ran Kryptonite into it, although that was after I stopped reading it, just to put a little suspense into it so my feelings always are, if you get rid of some of their powers or all of their powers or make it difficult for them to use it, you create just a little bit of suspense. As a premise, that's good. I wasn't able to do it as well as I'd like to because I didn't have the writer I would have like to work with there. Bob Kanigher did the scripts on it. I would have preferred to do it with a writer who I feel a little closer to. A guy like Denny O'Neal or Steve Sketes.

G.A.S.: Couldn't you control the writing situation?

DICK: To some degree. Y'know, office routine is office routine, and there are certain things that you can't get by. At the time, Denny O'Neal was tied up doint "important things" and he wasn't available for something like Teen Titans. It wasn't important enough for him. Steve Sketes was on something else at that particular time. Bob Kanigher was available at that particular time. Bob, I have to admit, worked very hard to try to do my thing. You've gotta understand that, Bob and I, it's not a personal thing, his editorial approach just isn't the same as mine. So for him to try to write something that I wanted was difficult for him. It was difficult for me to accept it only because our ideas were so different. It's not any personal thing. And the people I would have liked to work with were not available.

G.A.S.: Did the change bring the sales up or did they stay the same?

DICK: On Teen Titans, yes. The first issue did go up. Let me say this, that we knew that we were taking a chance and we did the hokey thing that you always do when you're taking a chance. The first issue, if you recall, we put Superman on the cover. Put Superman on the cover and sales will go up. We kinda figured we'd drag people in to watch, and if there was any acceptance of our new premise, they would continue to buy it. Sales continued to stay up for a couple of issues after that. It dropped each issue, but not by much. The first issue was a summer release which is, I think it was a summer release; I'm gonna take that back, I'm not positive. But it did have Superman on it and it brought the sales up. The sales dropped a little bit over the next few issues, but not alarmingly so and I didn't get any reports beyond that I think I read a memo at National in the last time I've been up there that it's been dropped and one of the next issues that's coming out is going to be the last, I don't know which one. Murry Boltinof took it over after that and I haven't read it since. I don't know which way it's gone.

G.A.S.: Is it true you wanted Reed Crandal for the Black Hawks?

DICK: One of the things I liked about the Black Hawks was Reed Crandal. Dick Dillan and Chuck Cudaira had done a Black Hawk for my predecessor, I think George Cashdin was the editor before, and I proofread that and while I was doing that my feelings were that the only one to do Black Hawk was Reed Crandal. I traced him down. He was out in Kansas somewhere. I ran him down and I called him up though we'd never met. And I said, "I wanna do Black Hawks and I want you to do it. You did the only Black Hawk that I really liked." And he seemed mildly enthusiastic. Y'know, he's kind of a low key character and I don't really think he was climbing the walls. But, okay, so I need the script. And I asked him, "Would you like to do a full script, or would you like to have a full script, or would you like to have a synopsis and break it down and we'll write copy later?" He said, "I'll try the synopsis." I sent it to him and I heard nothing for two weeks or so and I called and either got no answer or some woman saying that he wasn't in at the time and that he'd call back later and I never got called back. Now we're three weeks away from deadline, and I still haven't heard anything. And sometime after the three-week period I finally got a hold of him and he very guiltily told me that he didn't do anything on it and didn't want to. And I'm sure he had personal reasons. Reed has had some personal problems in his life. The upshot of it was that I had a synopsis and two weeks; as a matter of fact, it must have been even less time than that. What I did was I asked him to send the script down to Pat Boyette rather than back to me. I told him to send it to Pat Boyette who is in Texas which isn't as far from Kansas as New York is. Rather than

have it go around I had him send it directly down. I called up Pat. I didn't even ask him if he wanted to do it. I called up Pat after I had told him to mail the script to him. And I said, "Pat, you're gonna have a script in a day or two. I want you to take the script and draw it and letter it and ink it and write the copy and send it back to me." By this time I was desperate. I had to have a book to put out. It was done like in five days; it looked it. Actually I was happier with it than I thought I was gonna be considering the time it was done in. Pat did a great deal on that one. He did most of the writing, he did most of the art work. And then, right after the first issue I did was done they told me,"Forget it. We're gonna scrap it anyway. Do one more issue then scrap it." So I just told Pat, "We're gonna do one more issue then scrap it." I think even in having failed in getting Reed Crandal, though I wanted to and doing it there, I think that we could have come up with a pretty good thing with Pat Boyette had we had the time to work along with it, y'know.

G.A.S.: Did you like the Dillan version at all?

DICK: You've got to understand that I was called in to National to do certain things, one of them was to try to save a book that is falling. It wasn't a question of whether I liked Dillan or not. The thing is this. When you are asked to try to fix up something that's failing, what you do is you throw out everything and you start somewhere else. It wasn't that I didn't approve of his approach, it's just that if that was failing there was no sense in my continuing with it and if you wanna make a change you have to call attention to that change by showing that there is something different inside. So if it looks like Dillan, no one would buy it if he didn't buy it last time. But if it looks like someone else, there's a possibility that he'll pick it up and look at it. Okay, with that in mind my first thought then was Reed Crandal. I'm gonna get away from Dillan, like, where do you go? Well you go to Reed Crandal, that's an obvious choice. In my opinion, I think anyone would as soon have made the same choice. So that's why we tried Reed. That didn't work out. Pat Boyette was definitely a second choice, but I think he did very well under the circumstances and I think that if we had the time we might have been able to do something with it.

G.A.S.: We're aware that there were problems with staff relations on Hawk and Dove, and the Creeper, but why didn't you continue them after certain people had left?

DICK: You mean after Steve left it?

G.A.S.: Yes.

DICK: Well as far as it continuing after Steve left, you gotta understand that a company's publishing schedules have nothing

to do with the people who are doing it. They're gonna publish the sixth issue, they're gonna publish the sixth issue. And if Ditko leaves that doesn't change their mind. They decided to continue with Hawk and Dove until the sales proved it was worthless. It had nothing to do with Steve Ditko. In the publisher's head the creative people have nothing to do with the material. The material is separate from the creative people. I wouldn't necessarily agree with that point.

G.A.S.: Then the discontinuation had nothing to do with Ditko's leaving?

DICK: Oh no! It had nothing to do with Steve Ditko leaving. The decision to discontinue is always and only based on sales reports anywhere! I don't care what any publisher tells you or any editor tells you about "This was selling good but we decided to try something else." A lot of crap! If a book is discontinued, it's because it wasn't selling well enough. There's no other reason for it.

G.A.S.: What do you think of other artists doing Ditko strips? Like Tuska was doing Hawk and Dove in back of Teen Titans.

DICK: An artist who creates a character is always gonna be more emotionally involved with that character and he's probably gonna do it better than any other artist even if the other artist is better. I think that Steve Ditko could do the Creeper better than Neal Adams, even though I don't think he is a better artist than Neal Adams, because he is more involved with the character emotionally. I think that anyone else doing the character was second best.

G.A.S.: In Hawk and Dove there seemed to be some division in the intentions of the artist and writers.

DICK: Ditko's intention was to have a triangle with the Hawk on one point, the Dove on another, and their father on the third. That was moderation and two extremes. And his whole thing with doing that was the relationship between the three. His feeling was that if you took all of their attitudes and sort of swirled them up together you would be reasonably right. Whether I agree with that is quite beside the point, but that's what he wanted to do. And he and the writer didn't agree on how that could be best done, y'know, didn't always agree on it.

G.A.S.: Did you choose those books you did at National or were they given to you?

DICK: There was no choice; I was given the books. I did Specter for a couple issues. The editorial approach wasn't always my choice. That's one of the reasons I got out of it. There just wasn't enough freedom in it. You see as an artist I feel I am obligated to tell the story that I'm given to tell. It's a

craft problem. As an editor I'm not getting the jollies I get from drawing and I feel that as an editor, the only way I can enjoy myself is if I have complete freedom. I'm not drawing, I'm not writing, all I'm doing is managing the traffic of the artists and writers. If I have complete freedom, I can enjoy it. If I don't, I can't. I don't argue with the necessity of there being a strong central agency and a publishing company that says "We'll do it this way; we'll do it that way." It's just that I couldn't fit into that bag comfortably. I couldn't do it unless I enjoyed doing it.

G.A.S.: Do you think the publishers restrict artists and writers too much?

DICK: Yeah! I don't think there are too many people who wouldn't. It's one of those things that's hard to change because nobody has said we should change it. The publishers have been doing it in that one way without really stopping to think about whether it's the most profitable way. If we could show that our way was more profitable than their way, they'd be certain to listen. Unfortunately we haven't been. You see there have been very few occasions when artists and/or writers have been given free reign with material and it hasn't sold any better than the publisher's stuff. They haven't seen anything so far to indicate that we know more about what's good publishing than they do. Like Green Lantern is a perfect example of a labor of love on the part of Denny O'Neal and Neal Adams. This is what they wanted to do gang, and they got complete editorial freedom. Nobody interfered with them. They did anything that they wanted for those issues that they had. Julie Schwarts hardly read the scripts. It was being left completely up to these guys. Nobody bugged them. The only interference they may have gotten at all was on the covers. And that's because Carmine Infantino likes to lay out the covers. But that's a question of art and even there Neal probably laid out more than half of them which is an unusual percentage. Okay. Now here we have two people who have editorial control and did, I think, fairly good material within the confines of the concepts that they'd set up, and it didn't sell. So now we can't go to the publishers and say, "If you let the creative people handle things, we're gonna make good money for you," because so far, our batting average isn't that good. No better than theirs. No worse, but no better.

G.A.S.: Have you ever had trouble with the code?

DICK: I haven't had too much because I have my own code which is probably a little stricter than theirs. If there is anything I do that the code may object to is I generally have a tendancy to draw busty women and the code doesn't like busty women.

G.A.S.: Have you ever had trouble with that?

DICK: Not serious. Y'know, minor things, cut down the size of the bust a little. Generally they're right when they do it. I'm

not doing it with anything in mind. I don't sit down and measure it. It's just when I start drawing, it comes out that way. I just don't think about it all that much.

G.A.S.: What do you think of the rash of new artists and writers of the last three years, like Len Wien, Gerry Conway and Elliot Maggin? Have they improved comics or made them inferior?

DICK: I'm not gonna comment too much on whether they've made the work inferior. I don't think it's possible for there to be an influx of new young blood in any industry and for that to be a bad thing. I think that new influx is good in any industry and particularly ours where some of the older pro's have become sour through the years and are cranking out stuff for the sake of getting it out rather than getting involved in it. If the younger people show weaknesses, it's not through lack of effort but through lack of knowledge or ability. That will come with time. I think it's a really good thing, I think it was a necessary thing, I don't know where the next crop of comics, artists and writers would come from if we didn't have this influx in the last few years. Yeah, they go off on tangents that are bad to go off on, but they hadda do it sooner or later and they might as well get it out of the way now so they can settle down to doing what they're capable of doing. All of the people you mentioned have talent; I think all of them are capable of delivering good stuff over the next few years. I don't think they're gonna be Stan Lee types, but they're gonna do good stuff.

G.A.S.: Any you were particularly impressed with?

DICK: Well, over the years there's been a few. Of the ones that you've mentioned, I've been impressed the most with Gerry Conway at the outset, but Gerry has slowed down a little bit. Steve Engleheart certainly has come on with a bang. I think that some of them are more capable of doing, uh, extraordinary stuff than others are. Like Denny O'Neal certainly has the ability to do really good stuff. I think that Denny has been hampered by being so good that he has to do too much and has to water down his stuff. He needs a year's sabatical to get away from it and start new and get some fresh insights. We all do. At this point in time there isn't like anyone not working in this business to full capacity. There is so much work available that everyone is doing more than they're really capable of doing and it's hurting the quality of the material. But I can't blame anyone for it. I can't blame an individual like Denny O'Neal when the company he works for says, "Do this for us, do this for us, do this for us," and he tries to do it. I don't have the exact figures on this, but if he needs five days to do a twenty page story and he's forced to do it in three days, you know it's not going to be as good a story as he's capable of putting out. It just can't be. And that's what the problem is. We're all being pushed to do things quicker than we're capable of doing well. Frank has to do things faster than he wants to; I have to work faster than I want to. Everyone in this business is right now.

G.A.S.: Do you prefer doing the whole job or just inking?

DICK: I prefer inking from the standpoint of making money. I prefer doing the whole job from the standpoint of satisfying myself.

When I'm penciling and inking a job like Wonder Woman, I'm into it thoroughly for the time I'm working on it. For three weeks, it takes me about three weeks to get the book done, I sorta go down to my studio early in the morning and come home late at night. I don't shave, I don't wash, I just totally immerse myself in what I'm doing and enjoy it. I don't make anywhere near as much money at it as I do inking, but I really enjoy it. I enjoy the time I spend on it.

G.A.S.: Do you think comics will stay at 20¢ for the next few years?

DICK: Well, within the confines of what the price people say, y'know, Marvel had a little hassel with their 20¢, I don't think it can logically stay at 20¢ over the next few years. As a matter of fact, we might get hurt if they insist on keeping it at 20¢. I think they'll get hurt because there's gonna be a new union agreement with the engravers or the printers next year or the year after, I don't know when their contract comes up again, and when it does, we're gonna have an increase in our engraving rates and an increase in printing rates and there'll be an increase in the shipping rates because the teamsters will go get some more money. Right down the line, postal rates will go up and all this money goes out and the 20¢ is still there. Now that means that the publisher will be losing money. He either raises his price if he's allowed to, or he's gonna hafto get out of business.

G.A.S.: Then why did they cut back to 20¢ at all?

DICK: Baby, I wish I knew! That was my feeling all along that if they kept the 25¢ price. Well, I know why it happened, Marvel pushed 'em into it.

G.A.S.: Why?

DICK: You go talk to Goodman! How do I know? He made a move there which seems to me, this is just an opinion, it's not one that came from National. It seems to me that Goodman's move was based on a desire to drive National out of business. I can't think of any reason for him to do it. He decided to go to 25¢ at the same time that we did. He then cut back to 20¢ after a month of production at 25¢. He made an arrangement, I don't know when I say him, I'm not sure it was Goodman, but somebody made an arrangement with wholesalers to provide for a 50 percent discount on cover price. I mean they were selling the

book for a dime which is a price that National couldn't work within, and it made it more attractive to wholesalers to sell Marvel books at 20¢ than to sell National's at 25¢. They made more money on the Marvel books at 20¢. Naturally that hurt our sale tremendously. Marvel was getting display and we weren't. The decision to go back to 20¢ was pushed on us. Don't necessarily agree with it, I don't know what else could have been done. But that's the reason for that occurence, I don't know what the future is. I think it would have been better to stay at 25¢ and then cut back to thirty-two pages when things got tight. Just keep raising the price for the same package.

HA HA HA HA HA
HA HA HA HA HA

GIFT HORSE

by Tony Isabella

I was reading one of the volumes of Bennett Cerf that I store in my desk for these quiet nights we sometimes get when the sighting was made. A humanoid figure, sheathed in a glistening silvery metal, was falling through the smog-filled skies of my beloved Fun City. A team of agents had already been sent out to pick up those numerous pieces the thing would undoubtedly leave when it hit, but I was ordered to join them at the calculated impact point because, as ranking city officer, I would have to write the report on whatever was left of the object.

I work for an organization so secret that half of my very own men don't even know its name. We have no official stationery, the checks we receive being signed by a Rev. Philbrook Crossman of the United Church of Life's Poetry, a dummy that the government set up in some Kentucky post office box to effectively mask our operation from the public eye. Our job is to deal with threats to local and national security that are too horrendous to be dealt with by your standard security forces. In my somewhat spectacular career, I've captured a costumed villain called Dr. Kilowatt who caused the big blackout of 1967, foiled a mad scientist's diabolical plot to turn the Mayor into a guppy, and prevented an antedeluvian ape of great size from smashing Coney Island into kindling. Of course, we lost a few old biplanes on that latter job, but what are mere steel and wood objects compared to the innumerable human lives we had saved from extinction by our gallant actions?

Our computers had figured on the silver guy hitting smack dab on second base in Yankee Stadium about thirty seconds before I arrived on the scene. As it turned out, about a mile above the park, it started slowing down with some kind of retro rockets fastened a few inches above its feet. It touched down just as quietly as you please on pitcher's mound. We all kind of gawked at it, wondering if it would do or say anything.

It did.

It said, "Take me to your leader, please."

I called the President. The President said that it obviously wanted to talk to the leader of the state it had landed in. After all, it didn't land in California, did it? He told me to call the Governor.

I called the Governor. The Governor said that the damn thing obviously wanted to speak to the leader of the city that it landed in and that that would teach a certain uppity mayor to support any blacklisted senators in the future.

I called the Mayor. His Honor was about to suggest I contact the local councilman when I reminded him that he would now be living in the East River if it weren't for us and that he could show a little gratitude by helping us out and that I wouldn't get him out of any future trouble he got himself into if he didn't. When this request was posed in that light, His Honor could hardly refuse us.

The Silver Spaceman (as one of my sterling stalwarts had dubbed him) had been immobile and unspeaking since uttering those six

KIRBY & ADKINS-

famous words. We carried him to the mayor's office, stood him before that trembling potentate, and waited. After nearly two hours of waiting, the Mayor breathed a sigh of relief.

"Maybe he did want the Governor. After all, he's a much bigger leader than I am."

"Leader?"

The Silver Spaceman had suddenly returned to the world of the living, such as it was.

"Are you leader?"

The Mayor stammered out a yes. No sooner had the word escaped than the silver metal we had assumed to be the guy's skin began to become brittle and flake off. As the pieces fell to the floor, they evaporated into mist and vanished. Within minutes, the metal had been completely removed and we stood before a male humanoid so handsome as to make Paul Newman look like Alfred E.

"Greetings, Most High Ones," he said. "I am from the distant planet Seter and I ask that your land grant me asylum."

As we picked up our jaws from the carpet, our visitor told us that he was the only survivor of the planet Seter, a tiny speck of matter that had destroyed itself in an ultimate nuclear holocaust. He had escaped his planet's fate in an experimental space craft of his own design which had started to break up on entering the solar system and forced him to don the cumbersome ejection suit the rest of the way. Though he had not intended to land on this world, now that he was here he would offer his superior knowledge in the holy cause of world peace, that Earth would not follow Seter's example. The closest English translation of his Sterian name, he blushingly admitted, was Goodheart. A real gift to humanity.

The Mayor had wanted to put Goodheart to work on the problems of New York immediately, but we figured the civilized world should come first. Besides, I wasn't entirely convinced by Goodheart and wanted some time to check out his story. The president had wanted Goodheart in Washington, but agreed to wait until we found out the absolute sincerity of Goodheart's words. But, he wanted the truth as soon as possible. After all, there was another election coming up shortly.

I decided to try out Goodheart in our local office so that we could keep an eye on him as well as get some work out of him. The guy worked out pretty good. His first day there he put my usually unfiled files into better order than they'd ever been. A week later, he was acting as my personal secretary on non-secret matters. I was starting to scheme how to keep him in the office when we got an angry call from an impatient president. He gave us a week more to prove Goodheart a menace or get him started on ending the Asian war before that coming election.

We no longer had any choice. We had to get our answer within days. We decided to tempt Goodheart with top-secret documents. I opened our secret files to the Silver Spaceman. In a way.

After showing him the room and giving him a computerized pass to it, we allowed him to go into the room unescorted to find files for me. The room had been ringed with hidden cameras. Should our

Saterian friend start pokint around in other files, we would catch him in the act. A brilliant plan. One of my best.

The first time Goodheart went into the files room, everything seemed okay. There was just a brief moment of panic when the spy-screens faded out for about four seconds. But when they came back on again, nothing had happened and Goodheart was going through the correct file. I began to think, for just a moment, mind you, that he was on the level.

But when the cameras did the four-second blink-out every time Goodheart entered the file room alone, I was convinced that he was up to something. And not something good.

The people in my organization are trained to rely on the wits they were born with when mechanical devices fail them. I gave the men the order to drill peepholes into the walls of the secret file room so that we could watch Goodheart during that four-second time when our screens blinked-out. And, sure enough, the next time the Silver Spaceman entered the room, my suspicions were confirmed.

Placing his hand inside his pocket, Goodheart fingered a tiny device inside his pocket that made the screens go blank. Whipping out the device, he blanketed the room with a radiation that, as my men still in the camera room told me, fed false images to any camera within its limited range.

As soon as he had finished blanketing the room, Goodheart was at one of our most secret files, photographing its contents with a similar device. We had seen enough.

By the expressions on our faces, Goodheart realized he'd been discovered the moment he saw us kick down the door and charge into the room with our guns drawn. He lowered his head and ran through us like a battering ram, sending us sprawling to the floor. Pushing aside his pain, one of my boys swung his pistol at Goodheart's head, only to be rewarded by a loud metal clang. That was another surprise. Goodheart was a robot!

A few other blows landed on the Silver Spaceman with no visible effect. He returned the blows, rendering all of my brave men unconscious. Now it was between the two of us. I was boiling mad. I tried to shatter his skull with a chair. He tore the chair from my hands before it struck. He threw me across the room.

"Fool! I am a being made of uni-constructed metals! I am as one lump of metal, molded into this form and then given the liquid of life to drink! You can't hurt me! I'm invulnerable! You, man, are not! As I shall proceed to prove!"

I had one good punch, a right hook. It had served me well in my battle against Dr. Kilowatt and the mad scientist. Goodheart's remark about drinking the liquid of life gave me an idea where its best shot was. I swung at the robot's jaw and hit it in the mouth. It cracked open wide enough for me to reach in and grab me a fistful of wires. I don't know which wires I yanked, but they did the job. Goodheart dropped to the floor, spitting up bolts and screws, and "died." It was over.

We later ascertained that Goodheart had not been able to send any information out to his masters, though we never learned exactly who they were or even if they were human. One thing was clear, though. Their plan would have succeeded if not for one thing.

They never figured we'd hook a gift horse in the mouth.

NEAL ADAMS

NEAL ADAMS interview

introduction:

It was three in the morning and the last day of the 1972 New York comicon was yet to dawn when a team of G.A.S.Lite interviewers talked with artist Neal Adams.This is how it went.

G.A.S.: Mr. Adams, could you tell us where you got your art training? How you got into the field?

ADAMS: I got my art training at the School of Industrial Art and Design and through drawing pictures a lot.

G.A.S.: How long did you stay at the art school?

ADAMS: It was a high school course in which most of the teachers there were either not very good at what they were doing or were very tired of doing what they were doing, therefore couldn't teach very much.

G.A.S.: Well, didn't you have to go to higher learning or were you self-taught?

ADAMS: Contrary to popular belief, higher learning can be teaching yourself, and that's what I did. All artists teach themselves to become artists. Nobody can teach someone to become an artist.

G.A.S.: What was your first professional job?

ADAMS: I did some pages for Archie's Joke Book.

G.A.S.: What year was this?

ADAMS: 1959.

G.A.S.: After this, did you do a more lengthy strip for Archie?

ADAMS: After that, I worked as an assistant on a comic strip based on the Bat Masterson T.V. Series. I did backgrounds; I did zipatone; I did penciling; and when the strip ended, I went into commercial art.

G.A.S.: Who influenced you most?

ADAMS: Probably a list of about thirty, and if I think a little harder, I can think of another thirty--Anybody who can draw or compose well or paint well, anything that an artist can do well I appreciate.

G.A.S.: Can you name some right off hand?

ADAMS: Russ Heath, Joe Kubert, Stan Drake, Leonard Stark--to a small degree, Hal Foster, Al Parker, Robert Goset, Bob Peek, that's some . . . --Norman Rockwell.

G.A.S.: Can you name one who you admired enough to copy the style?

ADAMS: I copied styles a lot. During my learning process, I copied a lot. I copied Kubert's style, Kane's style and Heath's style, Mort Drucker's style in an attempt to learn what they were doing right and then I'd drop the style.

G.A.S.: Do you prefer working with strips or in comic book form? Do you find there's more freedom in one or the other or could you take them both?

ADAMS: Well it doesn't have much to do with personal preference. The fact is it's better in comic books for freedom's sake. You have a greater opportunity to do a greater number of things in comic books. When you have a strip, you're tied down. I know it because I've done both of them. If I had my druthers, I don't know. I don't think I'd try a strip, but whether or not I did wouldn't alter the fact comic strips really can be a drag if you do it too long.

G.A.S.: What do you think of the comic's code?

ADAMS: I think it's very pretty.

G.A.S.: Have you ever had trouble with it?

ADAMS: Never. It's a very good code.

G.A.S.: As everyone knows by now, you have created the Definitive Batman. Could you tell us how you came to create the character as he is now? Could you comment on that.

ADAMS: Bob Kane created the Definitive Batman, I just got in my time machine and travelled backwards. Wouldn't you agree Bob Kane created the Definitive Batman?

G.A.S.: Definitely.

ADAMS: Well, that's where I got it from.

G.A.S.: Well, what gave you the inspiration to do that?

ADAMS: From the comics. Didn't everybody think Batman should be what he originally

was supposed to be? Everybody that was reading comics felt that way; it's just the stupid publishers didn't -- they didn't know their asses from their elbows.

G.A.S.: Do you consider yourself an over-night success?

ADAMS: Yes, indeed, I'm fantastic. Thank God that God was behind me and was able to perform his miracle upon me that I was given this wonderous talent to do all these wonderful things.

G.A.S.: Do you remember the first strip you did? Could you tell us when you first got a super hero strip at National?

ADAMS: I remember it was the Specter, and it was a pretty good strip. I got to write some of it. When I got to write it, it was a very good strip, and when I didn't, it wasn't, but then it was Gardner Fox writing it and he's not really your definitive writer.

G.A.S.: Do you prefer writing your own stories? Would you prefer writing them all the time?

ADAMS: You know, I would like to write, and pencil, and ink, and color, and I would like to go down to the shop and reproduce my strip and well it to the salesmen, but I just don't have the time to do it. I depend on people like Denny O'Neil and Roy Thomas to provide the writing power, that I'm satisfied with to fill in that gap.

G.A.S.: How much of the work did you do in the Green Lantern/ Green Arrow series?

ADAMS: I did a lot of work.

G.A.S.: Writing-wise?

ADAMS: I didn't do any actual writing, but I did do some plotting on the drug books and the book with the Christ story, otherwise I was involved with conversation with Denny O'Neil deciding what we were going to try, but otherwise these were the only ones I wrote plot for.

G.A.S.: Who is your favorite writer?

ADAMS: Roy Thomas.

G.A.S.: Going back again, when you became the artist on Dead Man, how did you feel about the character and did you do any of the writing chores there?

ADAMS: I felt that the character was probably the best character National had and I wrote on it as much as I was able, considering the conditions at National at the time, which were very poor for an artist trying to write his own stuff, and I got to write, I

think, two of the Dead Man stories. One of them had to do with a little boy and his father who was a doctor, Doctor Bashnew, and the other one had to do with a lion story, I think -- I don't know exactly.

G.A.S.: What do you think of what Jack Kirby has done in reviving Dead Man?

ADAMS: I think it was nice of him to do that . . . .

G.A.S.: I mean the changes he has made.

ADAMS: (Mr. Adams gives the finger.)

G.A.S.: Well, looking at the Dean Man, are you every going to try and take it back up?

ADAMS: I've been talking about doing it for a couple of months and I expect my big mouth is going to get me into enough trouble that I'm going to have to get back on it.

G.A.S.: What made you go over to Marvel and become free lance?

ADAMS: Seemed like a good idea at the time. I went over and offered my services.

G.A.S.: Did you enjoy working at Marvel?

ADAMS: It was pretty good. . . . They gave me more money, by the way -- is that the answer you were expecting?

G.A.S.: Something like that . . . Do you prefer to draw from the Marvel concept of sitting down talking about the story and then drawing it out, or working from a set script as National tends to do it -- which do you prefer?

ADAMS: I think they're both fine. If I didn't like one of them, I wouldn't do it. If I just liked Marvel's idea, I'd work for Marvel, and if I just liked National's idea, I'd just work for National . . . . Both ways are fine -- I don't like doing things the same all the time. I get bored very easily.

G.A.S.: Which inker do you like most on your work?

ADAMS: I like Neal Adams on my art work. He's pretty good.

G.A.S.: And aside from yourself?

ADAMS: Dick Giordono, Tom Palmer. I'll put them together so that you don't put either one in the first category. Allow me to say Tom Palmer, Dick Giordono -- they're the two best inkers that

I've had and I consider them both of equal quality, both for different reasons. If I could get Alex Toth or Al Williamson to work on my stuff, that would be great too . . . . There's a whole bunch of people I'd like to have -- Joe Kubert, he inked a job for me, or I did a job for him.

G.A.S.: What was this?

ADAMS: It was in Enemy Ace.

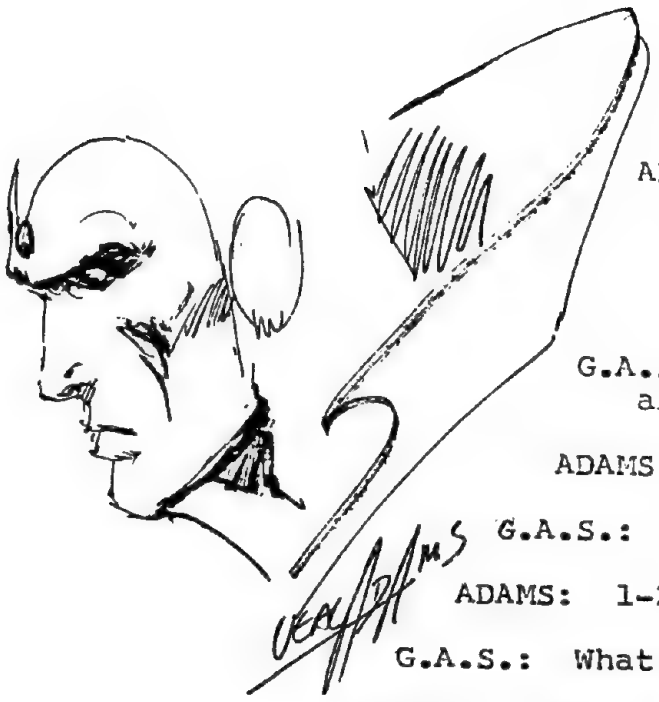
G.A.S.: What character would you like to do most?

ADAMS: None. I figure the thing wrong about comic books is not the characters. Most of the characters are just fine. They're just done badly. If they had a good artist and a good writer on any character, it would be a good strip . . . . I think that's been proven on Green Lantern/Green Arrow. I think we turned it into a really good book. Same with X-Men. Any book is good if you do it well.

G.A.S.: When you bring back Dead Man, are you ever going to have him capture The Hook? And what did you think about the way Kirby had that thing of criminals that all had hooks?

ADAMS: I thought that was interesting. It was a good idea . . . . I don't know exactly what we're going to do with it. The fact is the guy that Dead Man supposedly killed as The Hook wasn't really The Hook -- excuse me, he didn't really kill him anyway. So it doesn't really matter what we do with it.

G.A.S.: As I recall, in the last issue or so of Dead Man, this character who called himself The Hook admitted to killing Boston Brand. Now is this guy a paranoid, or he didn't know what he was talking about. Obviously he had a hook and obviously he was going around saying he killed Boston Brand and obviously he was a professional killer -- what does it mean?



ADAMS: It means I'm going to have to do a lot of thinking to get myself out of that now that Jack Kirby has tied me up so neatly . . . . But I'll work it out.

G.A.S.: How do you rate yourself with other artists?

ADAMS: I'm pretty good -- one of the best.

G.A.S.: How many pages do you do a day?

ADAMS: 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9, and sometimes 10.

G.A.S.: What can we expect from you in the future?

ADAMS: Batman Joker story.

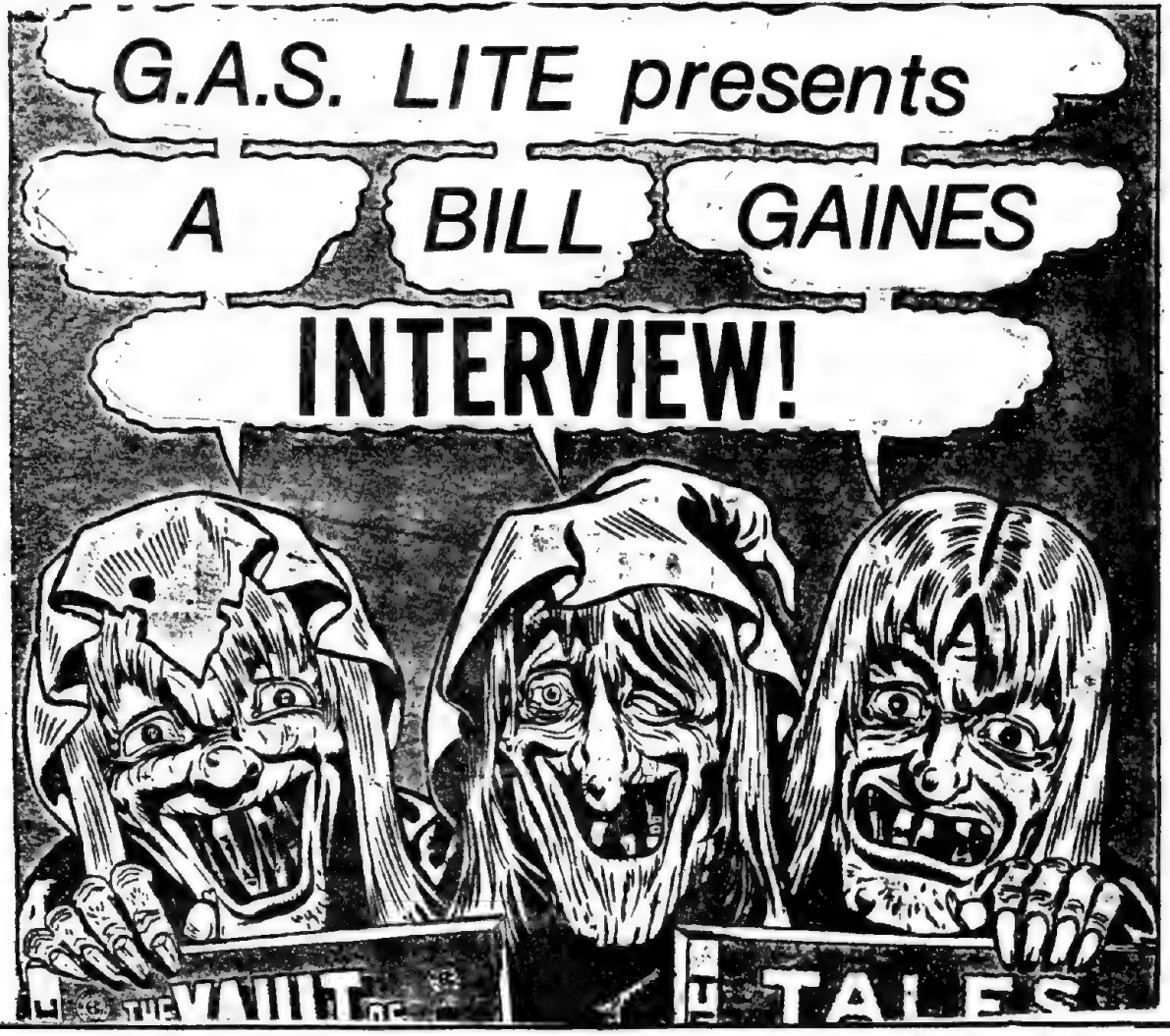
THE END

Mr. Natural

33
GEE! I LOOK YEARS YOUNGER WITH MY BEARD THIS COLOR!
MR. NATURAL'S NEW LOOK THANKS TO DEAN NATKIN CARLING HOTEL CHICAGO ILL.

DO NOT INTERFERE!
DONT EAT SALT SAYS MR. NATURAL!
THE COUNTRY'S GOING TO THE DOGS SAYS MR. NATURAL! JOIN UP NOW
DONT MAKE WAVES SAYS THE NATION
MAKE WAY! MAKE WAY!
HEY I NEVER SAID THAT!
WE LIVE OUR LIVES AND BEHAVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRECEPTS AND UNIVERSAL TRUTHS GIVEN TO US BY OUR LEADER MR. NATURAL, AND ALL OUR INITIATES MUST STUDY THESE FIVE BOOKS WHICH COVER THE FIVE STAGES NECESSARY TO BECOME A TRUE MR. NATURALIST!
YA DONT SAY!

MR. NATURALISTS DONT NEED DRUGS!! WANNA GET REALLY HIGH? JOIN UP!
HOW 'BOUT A RELIGION CALLED TH' GRASS-ASSISTS! SNIGGER SNIGGER!
YOU MASHER!!
IT WAS A JOKE, LADY! I WAS ONLY KIDDING! HONEST!



Q. How did you get the idea for MAD?

A. Well, we were publishing crime comics and war comics and horror comics and we wanted something funny. So, I knew that Harvey Kurtzman had done humor, so I asked him to come up with a new humor magazine, and it was MAD.

Q. How did you become publisher of E.C.?

A. My father had started E.C. after he left D.C., and he was killed in an accident in 1947, and that's how I got into the comic book business.

Q. How did you acquire so many good artists?

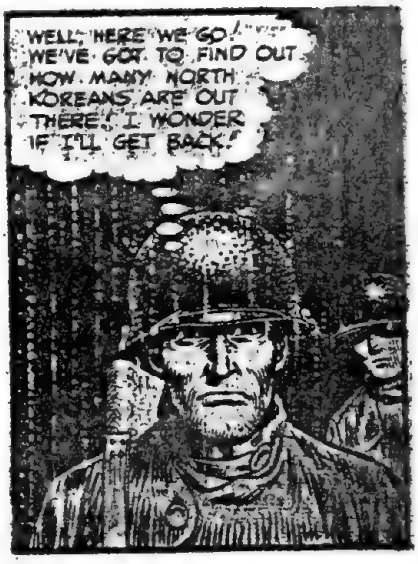
A. Somebody like Wood we got before he was famous. Woody developed with us and helped make us famous. Frazzetta came along a little later. Actually, Frazzetta didn't do that much work for E.C. because we got him a little late. But E.C. was the kind of place that artists liked to work because they had artistic freedom to a large extent. So some of the best artists ended up coming to us. We didn't really go after them; they came after us.

Q. What do you think of the Code?

A. Not very much.

Q. There was a code set up previous to the present one. What did you think of that one?

A. Well, that code wasn't so much a code as it was the opinion of this particular lawyer whose name was Schultze, whether what we were doing was permissible or not. Generally it was much easier to work under that code than under the present code, however; <u>because</u> it was so easy to work under that code, we got into a lot of trouble (laughing). That's what led to the present code.



Q. Why did you switch over entirely to MAD?
A. Because after the code came along and we dropped all the horror and crime books and put out the New Direction books they all lost so much money that I had to stop them. And the only one that still was making money by then was MAD. The reason for that was because we had changed mad from a comic to a 25 cent black and white, as it is now, and we didn't go through the code. So, we were fortunate in that one book was left, which was all we had.

Q. Where did Alfred E. Newman come from?
A. Harvey Kurtzman first used Alfred E. Newman on the MAD reader in 1954. It was a paperback; the first paperback book, Ballantine.

Q. Is that out of print?
A. Oh, no. It's still around, but it has a new cover. Alfred E. Newman had been around for about eighty years and he was on post cards and pictures and Harvey just got a post card and liked it and started to use him.

Q. Who brought this character up in the beginning?
A. No one knows for sure. We've been trying for eighty years to find out exactly where it came from and nobody knows.

Q. What do you think of the movie "Tales from The Crypt"?
A. Well, I wasn't too happy with it. It could have been better.

Q. Did it follow your stories closely?
A. It followed some of them pretty closely--some of them not so closely.

Q. Specifically...?
A. It followed "Poetic Justice" pretty closely.

Q. Were there any new stories in the film?
A. They were all old E.C. stories.

Q. Why did you go over to D.C.?
A. I didn't go over to D.C. I'm over there helping Carmine with the business end a little bit, that's all. I'm still at mad mostly.

Q. What do you think of the horror books of the '60's and '70's as compared to E.C.?
A. Well of course, the color stuff goes through the code, so it's much tamer. The black and white stuff--the art generally is beautiful. I think the script sometimes is weak, but they got a lot of fine art in there.

Q. Have you read any Warren books lately?
A. Not for a long time.

Q. So you wouldn't know who T. Casey Brennan is?
A. No.

Q. How many years have you been publisher of E.C.?
A. 26.

Q. Who's your newest artist?
A. Paul Peter Porgis, who's an old timer in the art trade. He started doing work for us in the last couple years. He's about the newest artist we have. We rarely take on a new artist. Once in awhile we'll run a job by an artist --maybe just one time. I can't think of anyone who's been a regular. Torres--Angelo Torres--who took on when Mort Drucker couldn't handle two stories an issue.

Q. He's been copying Mort Drucker?
A. Well, we want him to.

Q. Why was there such a change between old and new MAD?
A. Well, of course, Harvey Kurtzman was the editor then and Al Feldstein was the editor since 1956, so the first four years are going to be different than the last sixteen.

Q. Is it true that Eerie Publications is getting sued for taking something from an E.C.?
A. There was somebody recently. We've sued somebody twice in the last three or four years in the black and white field and maybe that's the one you're talking about. I don't too clearly remember who it was, but probably that is who you mean. They recently stole a Wood story, I think, and we nailed them on that one and we got a few bucks out of it.

Q. Has Wood been doing much for you lately?
A. Only one Woody job in ten years, I think, and that was something on the Catholic Church.

Q. Would you have wanted to stay with the science fiction books?
A. Oh, we loved them. They weren't making money, but we enjoyed them. Moneywise, everything that happened turned out to be for the best. We made much more money with MAD at a quarter than we made with a whole line of comics at a dime. But if I had been given the choice at the time, not knowing that, I would have stuck with what I had.

Q. Are you grateful then for the circumstances that brought you into this situation?
A. Well, in a sense, yes. If a guy takes a baseball bat and trys to hit you over the head with it and instead of hitting you he misses and breaks open a piece of furniture that has a million dollars in it, and it's yours, you can be grateful that the guy tried to hit you. But it doesn't mean you're going to love him for it. He wasn't trying to do it. As such you can say that the comic code made me a rich man. You know, I'm not happy with them because of it.

Q. At D.C. are you simply giving advice, or do you have a say in what's going on?
A. Well, Carmine and I get along very well, and there are not any arguments. I'm only up there one day every week, and now and again I'm up there every <u>two</u> weeks. Today is the day to be there. Today's a holiday so I won't be there this week.

SHORTLY AFTER JOHN GAVE ME THE PENDANT, WE RAN SHORT OF CASH. JOHN SOLD THE PENDANT IN NEW YORK... BUT BECAUSE I WAS AFRAID OF WHAT PEOPLE HERE WOULD THINK, I HAD HIM MAKE A DUPLICATE OF IT BEFORE HE SOLD IT. THE PENDANT I LENT YOU THAT NIGHT WAS A CHEAP PASTE IMITATION...
PASTE...??
OH... GOD...

Q. Have you ever thought of bringing back those old E.C.'s? Because you're making so much money on MAD you can really afford to.

A. No, not in the format we edited it. You have to understand that all this stuff, much as you like it, doesn't necessarily mean that it's commercially feasible. Comic books today must be printed at no less than a quarter of a million, and to put it out as a comic book, it wouldn't sell. I don't think there's a quarter of a million people that interested in the old E.C.'s. A few thousand; a quarter of a million is an awful lot of people.

Q. At this convention, I, myself, just bought $13 worth of E.C.'s.

A. Yeah, I know, but this is just pretzels. This whole convention, with all the people who came and went, there's only about 3,500 people. A quarter of a million! That's two hundred and fifty thousand--unbelievable number. It's hard to conceive what a quarter of a million is. You can <u>say</u> it, but you can't really conceive what a quarter of a million is.

Q. Were there any S.F. writers particularly influenced the E.C. S.F. stuff?

A. You mean other writers?

Q. Mostly from outside the comcis field.

A. Oh, yes! Particularly Ray Bradbury.

Q. Can D.C. reprint E.C. material since both are under Kinny?

A. Now, let's get this straight. Kinny owns MAD, but Kinney does not own the rights to any of the other E.C. books. I only sold MAD, so D.C. has no claim to anything in the old E.C. line.

Q. Do you have anything planned in the future besides MAD?

A. No.

Q. Do you think that there will be any changes in MAD in the forseeable future?

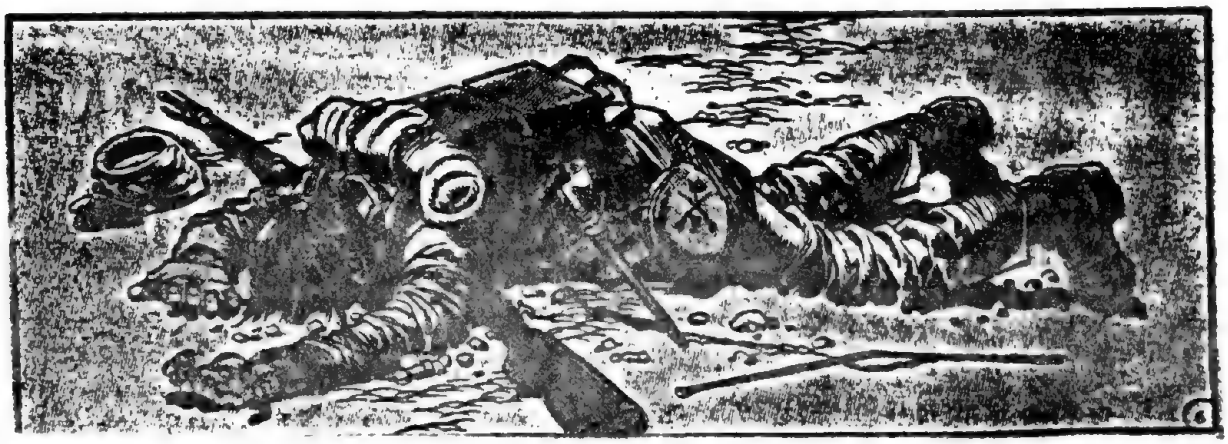
A. Not that I know of.

Q. Do you have anything to say to finish up the interview?

A. Only that I'm very impressed with the way you guys interview.

...AND ON THAT UNLIKELY NOTE, OUR BILL GAINS INTERVIEW COMES TO

THE END



TONAN? BY M. HUDAK

The sun rose over the desert like a spectral image with its feeble rays filtering through the morning haze. The sky turned from dusk purple to morning crimson as if a beast side has been gashed open revealing a festering wound.

Amidst the sands that never cease to blow stood a figure, a figure that stood against the sky, melted together with the sand, the figure of Tonan. Tonan the conqueror, warrior, adventurer, and you-surper. Or is it Usurper? Well, anyway, there he stood, like a beast side who has been gashed open revealing a festering wound. Or was that the sky that was festering? Oh well, something was festering, and it stunk pretty bad. I guess it was Tonan that was festering. No, he was sweating pretty bad, and nothing smelled worse than a sweating person walking through the blazing morning sun on a desert. WHEW!! Festering, stinking, and in need of a bath pretty bad, Tonan walked on and on and on. "Curse this gosh-darn desert. I, Tonan, shall not be overcome by the sun or the sand, even though I am very tired, thirsty, and desperate need of a bath," he said with harsh words. Then he fell on the ground. No, he fell on the sand. Or whatever it was. Who the hell cares; it was Tonan that fell and not me.

Well, to get back to Tonan. "Oh! My head. Anybody got an Alka Seltzer? What am I talking about; they won't be invented for another 2,000 years. Guess I'll have to take a Bromo."

Just then a vulture swooped down upon Tonan. He bit its throat out. He exclaimed, "Why in the hell would I want to do that? Oh yeah! I forgot I did the same thing when I was being crucified. Guess it's force of habit."

Off in a distance, Tonan could see gleaming towers and spires, and roof tops made of silver and gold. "Hey man, what I could get for a shingle from one of those roofs in Zamoria. About twelve hundred glleeppss, or forty dollars in American money."

Tonan entered the city by the huge jewel encrusted gate. He drew his sword which was strapped to his loin cloth. He was glad to draw it from his sheath, for every time he would run, his loin cloth would fall. "Tis good to be in a civilized city even tho I myself am an illeterate and unedjucated barbarian." Just then there was a noise. Tonan looked about which at that same instant he drew his poinard. He was glad he drew his poinard, because every time his loin cloth would fall, it would stab him in the groin. He whirled about surveying the surrounding terrain of the city. He could see nothing.

The reason he could see nothing was because he always closed his eyes in fear of unseen noises.

Suddently he felt something slip around his leg and pull him down. Taking his sword, he chopped and slashed at his unseen enemy.

"Aieee! I have killed my foe."

Looking a little shocked and stark naked, he realized that his loin cloth had fallen after he unsheathed his sword which made him fall. And now it lay in shreds.

Just then a large pot fell from a roof perpendicular with Tonan, but he wouldn't know what I mean so I'll just say across from him. He was startled for a moment but soon gained his composure after taking an Anacin.

"Ho tis a fiend who throws pots at Tonan instead of facing Tonan himself. Well by my beard I'll not run you you. Do you hear me?" Yes, I hear you," said a menacing voice from overhead. Tonan ran. The voice said, "I thought you said you would not run." "I swore by my beard, and as you see I shaved mine," replied Tonan.

Just then a pot hit Tonan on the head. He fell and tumbled into a nearby doorway. When Tonan awoke, he found himself in lush surroundings, and a beautiful woman at his side. "Who are you young and beauteous woman? He said with a hint of passion in his throat.

"I am a young and beauteous woman," she replied.

"OH!" He said.

She stared at his naked thews. "What are those?" she pointed.

Tonan blushed and said, "Well, you see, it's like this, honey," he hesitated, then said with a red face, "those are my elbows."

"Oh!" She said.

Just then a slow rumbling noise grew in the distance like a giant rock rolling down a hill. "What is that?" he asked her.

"Oh, it is nothing but a slow rumbling rock coming down the hill."

"Where is it headed?" said Tonan.

"Right for us," she said.

"Well, looks like that time again."

"Time for what?" she said.

"To run."

"Oh!" she said.

Just then the rumbling grew louder, as if it was almost upon Tonan. As a matter of fact, it was on Tonan. "Don't just stand there and gawk young and beauteous woman, help me."

"I cannot," said the girl with pity in her voice.

"Why, you wrench. Or is that wench? Well, anyway, why can't you help me?

"For if I do, the plague of 9,999 deaths will be upon me," she said.

"Why the uneven number of deaths?" replied Tonan.

"If I tell you, will you promise not to tell anyone?"

"I promise on my Amra membership badge, I won't."

Before the young and beateous woman could fulfill Tonan's request, she was attacked by a giant spider, left over from one of the King Klunk stories.

The spider bit her in the left thigh, and its venom was swift and deadly. She thighed instantly, or is that died. Oh well, who cares, it happened to her.

"Well, there's only going to be the plague of 9,998 deaths on her now." Walking slowly away from her body, Tonan noticed a pair of sandals sticking out from beneath a tapestry which hung nearby. "Ah! Could this be the person who hit me on the head with the pot?

Swiftly Tonan tore the tapestry with one great sweep of his pionard, then replacing it in his loin cloth.

"OWWW!!" Tonan was groveling in pain, for he forgot he lost his loin cloth, and now Tonan's poinard was sticking out of his stomach.

The man behand the curtain who belonged to the sandals came swiftly to his aid. "Sell you a used loin cloth buddy, cheap," exclaimed the man.

"But I have no money," replied Tonan.

"Well, that's a pretty nice poinard you got sticking in you buddy. How about a trade."

Okay. I was getting pretty chilly anyway." So the transaction was made. Tonan was clothed, and the salesman has a new poinard.

"I didn't catch your name," said Tonan.

"Lyon," replied the man.

"Lyon who?"

"Lyon S. DeCamp, the used loin cloth salesman."

"Naw, it couldn't be the same guy," though Tonan, "or could it?"

It was nearly night fall, and Tonan was getting hungry. "There's got to be some food in this city, and I must avenge myself on the person who hit me with the pot and rolled the rock on me. What is this? A storehouse of food. Ah! Now I can sit down to a feast for a king."

Tonan was almost finished with his supper when he heard a curious rolling and scraping sound coming from the other side of the walled room in which he was in.

Just then Tonan realized that he had seen no other people in the city except himself and the girl. "It must be the one I'm after. Boy, is he gonna get it," thought Tonan.

Tonan drew his sword from his loin cloth and steathily creeped to the doorway. What he saw amazed him. No, it frightened him. As a matter of fact, he hid he was so scared.

In front of him stood a giant slug. "By the great Polish god CROMski," he said. "Where in the world would a person get a slot machine that big to fit this slug?"

Trembling in his sandals, Tonan hid in the shadows.

The slug rolled about, sniffing the still lingering scent of Tonan, and believe me, if you were sweating and walking through the desert in the morning sun, you'd leave a scent.

Suddenly from the shadows appeared a beckoning figure. "Psstt! Hey buddy, need some help?" said the voice. "I can use all the help I can get," Tonan said.

"Well give me something for payment, and I'll dispose of that slug for you."

"All I have is my sword and loin cloth."

"The sword will do," said the stranger.

Tonan tossed it to him and said, "How do you plan on getting rid of the slug?"

The figure in the shadows said, "Erase him."

"Erase him!" shouted Tonan.

"Just you watch." Taking eraser in hand, he bagan the seemingly impossible task of disposing of the monster. Piece by piece, the slug disappeared, until finally nothing.

"Magic?" Tonan asked.

"Yes," replied the figure. "Magic."

"What type? Black magic, white magic, or magic magic?"

"No, just plain Frazetta magic."

"Frazetta magic?" Tonan asked.

"Yes, haven't you ever heard of the Magic of Frank Frazetta?"

Before Tonan could thank the stranger who appeared from nowhere, he was off.

"I don't care if I ever avenge myself, I'm getting out of this place."

Then out of a clear blue sky, well it was really black because it was nightfall, came the mysterious voice, who hit Tonan on the head.

"You have proven yourself, Tonan."

"I have proven myself of what?" replied the bronze giant. No wait, that line's in a Doc Savage story. Sorry Lester.

"That you're a coward," said the voice.

"I could of told you that myself," Tonan throught to himself. "Who are you? Show yourself," yelled Tonan.

From amidst the shadows appeared a figure that struck Tonan in his tracks. "You. I though you died a long time ago."

"No. I lived for this moment, to avenge myself of this indignity of this story. I am Robert E. Howard."

Then a pot came out of the sky and knocked Tonan cold.

Well, I'm glad you beared through this story with me, (just think, you had to read it, while only I had to write it), so till next issue of Concusion. Hail Tonan fans. Or is that Conan fans? Oh well, hail to you all.

E N D ?

VAUGHN BODE and T. CASEY BRENNAN interview

G.A.S.: (To Casey) Could you give us a rundown on your career?

CASEY: I first started writing seriously in the fall of 1967. And by February of 1968, I sold my first story to Warren for $25. Now in that year I made a number of other sales to men's magazines. I did some pretty high quality work for men's magazines. In 1969 I had some things published. But really the first big break was when **On** The Wings of a Bird was published in 1970 because it was the first really meaningful piece of work that I've had published in the comics. Also Death of a Stranger which wasn't quite as good. The didn't get the response that On The Wings of a Bird did. From that point on, of course, I was nominated for the Comic Art Fan Awards and the ACBA Awards, The Ray Bradbury CUR and it's just mushroomed since then, since On The Wings of a Bird. That was my first really big break was getting that published in the first place cause that was not a typical Warren story, for that era, and I'm just grateful that it got by the editor without being so screwed up that it wasn't recognizable.

G.A.S.: Now long after On The Wings of a Bird, Warren started doing more of that kind of thing until the whole editorial policy seemed to change. Do you think you started that?

CASEY: Yeah, I think so! Yeah, I really do, because up to that point you were seeing mostly werewolf and vampire stories and nine out of ten of them, in the end, the good guy turned out to be the vampire or something like that, and people were getting fed up with that kind of thing. And when On The Wings of a Bird got published, it brought in so much response that it was obvious to everybody in that office that that was the kind of thing that the fans wanted. It was also obvious that young readers and young kids can understand a lot more than they're given credit for, and they don't have to get a lot of pablum. If they can be given something meaningful, they can understand it, often times a lot better than the older readers can because the older readers may be a little set in their ways. And they don't bother to try and think it over, y'know, never get the meaning out of it.

G.A.S.: (To Vaughn) Could you give us a rundown on your career?

VAUGHN: Well, I started out in commercial art after I got out of the Army. In 1958 and '59 I was in the Army. I was a technical illustrator in the Army and a military policeman. But I was AWOL most of the time. But then, of course, I was a highly trained specialist in knowing exactly what to do, being a policeman. Then I started working in various commercial jobs and working in commercial illustration. And then worked myself to positions in Hollywood. I worked as an art director for a manufacturing company. And then eventually I started into working back here in the East and got into more technical illustration and, of course, I didn't like that. But then I went into college and then from college I started into the cartooning. I had been using the Cartooning media to express my schitzophrenic involvement with reality. Which is really where it's all at for me. I never designed myself as a professional. My style comes from just a personal involvement with my work. And so you hear, for instance, that I can do this show. I can do this show because I was there. I was on all these planets, I did all these things, just like I was gone for years. That's why I can stand up there; I know what they talk like because that's the way I talked when I was there. So I went into illustration science fiction covers and then I went out of illustration getting very fed up with it, and went into the underground. Working in the underground I finished college and just was generally interested in the underground, and then the Cavalier magazine had me come up out of the underground and work for them. They saw me in the East Village other and they asked me if I would do some stuff for them and I said "Yes I will, if I retain all rights and if you don't bug me. Don't even ask to see the pencils." Which they don't.

G.A.S.: Do they bug you about deadlines?

VAUGHN: Yes they do. I'm supposed to be working right now. I'm supposed to Monday be turning in my latest set. But I told them I wouldn't be able to get finished till Friday. So I'm going back to work like a mad man in my studio up on a mountain in Woodstock.

So I just started and I continue working in the underground. Now the underground artists, a lot of them, are in San Francisco. My brother just came up and he says, "Listen, Vaughn, these guys think you're a hack." My contemporaries think I'm a hack because I'm coming out with no new material. I'm coming out with junk waffle but they misunderstood. Junk waffle was sold as a collection of old work which I had done, in a series of books. Because nobody has ever really seen them. Like who saw Tubbs? Nobody! Maybe a hundred and fifty people, or two hundred. And the man for instance was not seen by anybody. Only was seen by a few Colleges and things. So it was just my idea to get my work out as far as I could.

But now I'm going to be going into performing and lecturing at universities.

G.A.S.: (To Vaughn) Have you ever thought of making a motion picture?

VAUGHN: I have two motion pictures already outlined. They were negotiating with me before Fritz The Cat.

G.A.S.: Why didn't yours come out first?

VAUGHN: Well, Ralph Bachy, who directed Fritz the Cat, was a friend of mine and he wanted to do my movie and then they decided that they'd do my movie second and I didn't want to sign up second. I just realized that if I signed my material over to them they might hold it forever.

G.A.S.: We hear that Crumb was not too satisfied with Fritz the Cat.

VAUGHN: Furious! He said he'd give up the character. He'd even change his style.

G.A.S.: Does it worry you that they might do something to your film?

VAUGHN: After Fritz the Cat, I'll just make sure that I have right of refusal on scenes and things like that. I've got an agent in New York, Henri Morisson, who's a really good agent. He's Silverburg's agent and Palasny's and he's going to be selling the movie.

G.A.S.: What is the Deadbone Platoon?

VAUGHN: A United States Captain wrote to me during the high point of the war and he said the (his platoon) now call themselves the Deadbone Platoon. And he sent pictures of the men standing around their helicopters, the pilots and the gunners. And he says "We fly combat." And he say, "As a matter of fact, the North Vietnamese know about your series, too." Cause he said, "They tried to misdirect us by calling us in scramble. Y'know, by coming on saying "Deadbone Platoon, your coordinates for your targets are changed." And they'd try and foul them up and they'd come on in English sometimes and say it. So this captain and everybody else, they've got this thing called The Bode Bible in which they collect all the bode work and everything else. The National Cartoonist Society said that they would send me over to meet the platoon if I wanted. But I'd have to go over with the National Cartoonist Society tour and I couldn't afford the time. It was a six-week tour.

They asked if I would sesign something for them and I designed a patch. I don't know what happened. I think that they used it on the helicopter. They definitely used it on their helmets and they made it into patches for their tunics. It's the Hundred and First Air Mobile Squad.

G.A.S.: How would you feel about people making patches and other such items to capitalize on your work like they have done to Crumb?

VAUGHN: I had an offer to have my work done in jigsaw puzzles. I turned that down because that's just crass commercialism. I want tasteful commercialism. My work is being translated next year into seven languages. Into Danish, Swedish, German, French, Italian, Spanish, also Japanese.

G.A.S.: Wll, what about all the dialect stuff in your work?

VAUGHN: Well, this is going to be one of our translating problems, to make sure that the people who are translating it put it into their dialogue. For instance, "ball" here in this country, means fuck and not over in Europe. It doesn't mean that. They have their own colloquialism so what we're going to have to do is be very careful that they translate to their slang.

G.A.S.: If you had an animated movie would you have someone else do the drawings for you?

VAUGHN: They better! I would do the story board and the major part of the script. And probably would do the voices of the characters myself. I don't think that I would get involved in the actual animation. I don't want to. Ralph Bachy was courting me for a long time to do a series for him and to do movies so he showed me the Fritz the Cat thing that was being done. And told me all about the animation and things like that. And he would guarantee in my contract that they would keep my style; they would keep motion and dialogue and everything else the way my characters are.

G.A.S.: (To Casey) Did you ever consider writing for movies?

CASEY: Yeah, I've got something in the works right now. I don't know how it's going to come out though. It's a local producer that's been doing commercials and shorts and I'm talking with him and something might develop out of it.

G.A.S.: Would you like to go into movies?

CASEY: For the money I would. But speaking strictly from the standpoint of what medium I find most satisfying, I could say that in all seriousness, I like comics best of all. As long as I have a good artist. I would like to do a movie and I'm sure I would find it rewarding, but so far, the thing that I like best to do is comic books, as far as personal satisfaction.

G.A.S.: (To Casey) Do you think comics should carry a message?

CASEY: Well, I think it's important that they carry a message. I don't think that necessarily it has to be a political message.

I think it can be just a meaning. A lot of the stories that I've done, On The Wings of a Bird, Carrier of the Serpent, A Stranger in Hell, they carried a message. They weren't political messages though. What kind of message would you call 'em?

G.A.S.: A moral message?

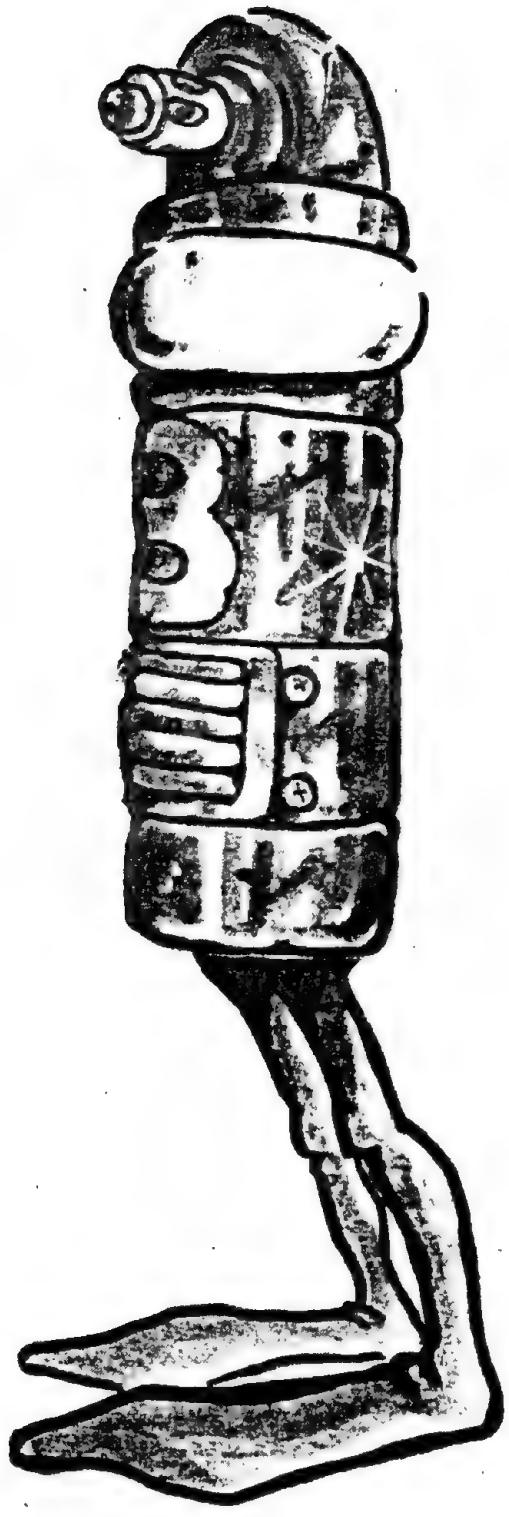
CASEY: Or an ethical message. Sometimes it just doesn't really give an answer, just poses a question. Y'know? Now that kind of thing I like to see. And I like to see the things that Denny O'Neal is doing too. But all I'm saying is that I think the comic books deserve a lot better treatment than they were getting ten years ago. I think that people who read comic books deserve to see good stories. Whether they be relevant stories or not, they should be good stories.

G.A.S.: (To Vaughn) Do you think that comics should carry a message?

VAUGHN: Of course. That's why I'm not working for Stan Leg and National.

G.A.S.: What about Warren?

VAUGHN: And Warren? Well no, I won't say that because like Warren really wanted me very much to work for him knowing that everything I do I try to aim at some relevance because I consider



myself a satirist. Originally I really considered myself a writer, but then I realized that writers are artists and we are all artists, so I stopped doing that kind of definition trip. And so let's say I'm a social satirist, a sexual satirist of late. And I'm always trying to deal with problems. When I'm reading Sunpot, for instance, I'm working to bring it all together, the naration parts, to show very obviously that this thing was a personal system of satire really. We are, each of us, the Sunpot system. It's like a somewhat fucked up system sometimes, sometimes a very effective, powerful system.

G.A.S.: What do you think of O'Neal's type of relevance.

VAUGHN: I've gotta say that the first job is to entertain. And it's always the first job; that's what I try to do. I'm not up there on a heavy trip to make people bored. So you try and entertain and you try and weave things in, if you can, if you're sensitive enough, it automatically happens. You weave things and opinions and feelings into various levels and depths. So That's really relevance. Relevance comes by the artist.

G.A.S.: Casey, same question.

CASEY: Y'know, I was just thinking about what Vaughn was saying. How your opinions become weaved into a story. How it occurs naturally, y'know, and that kinda thing I really like to see, and a lot of Denny's work I like to see too.

G.A.S.: But you don't do that kind of story yourself?

CASEY: Yeah! Y'know, I did an interview for the newspaper and they asked me "Are you dealing with all these problems?" And I said, "no" because there's too many people doing it so much better

than I could. Vaughn is doing it in a satirical way. Denny is doing it in a serious way. And so on. And what I'm trying to do is just sort of put forth my own personal view of life apart from any social and political view. But actually, if you really get into the message of my story, I think that if you feel them all the way, it would come without saying that you're going to be, say, against the war, maybe, against racism, against pollution, all the things that are wrecking our world. It would seem to come as a matter of course.

G.A.S.: (To Casey) Do you think that you have enough freedom in comics?

CASEY: At one point I had trouble with editorial policy in the Warren magazines because there were certain people there who are no longer there, that in my opinion didn't understand what I was trying to do. Now I've discussed the problems I had with Mr. Warren and I don't believe that I will be having these problems again. So lately I've been doing pretty much whatever I want. So no, I'm not having any more problems.

G.A.S.: (To Vaughn) Why did you become an underground artist?

VAUGHN: Because of that! So that I wouldn't have any of those problems.

G.A.S.: Well, in the undergrounds, do they just say "Do whatever you want and we'll take it?" Is there any editorial policy at all?

VAUGHN: The only editorial policy, for instance, from these companies are they have an editorial philosophy and you can do anything you damn well please on that particular thing. One company says, "Look, we like things on drugs." See, and anything about drugs is fine. But they wouldn't take The Man, because that's not part of their policy. But they'd take something that is like a real Zap comic. There is no editorial censorship. And with Cavalier Magazine, the only reason I've stayed with them for four years is because they have only censored me like four times in all that time. They just don't like a few words. Like, they are worried about getting pulled off the stands by the Army.

G.A.S.: How do you get into the underground comics?

VAUGHN: Well, as a matter of fact, when I go out to California in January, I'm taking out a number of artists' work. They have given me work and Bert Barg of Last Gasp Comix was very interested

in having me be the director for Last Gasp Pure in the East Coast. The whole thing of their distribution and generally getting together new comics groups out here. I'm not going to do that. But I'm going to introduce some artists to him. So it's simply, send the work in. It's very easy. And if they like the work or they dig what you like to say, then you've got yourself into Comix.

G.A.S.: (To Casey) Would you like to do a series?

CASEY: I don't want to be restricted by other people's characters. I don't want to do somebody else's series.

G.A.S.: We mean your own series.

CASEY: I would. However, I don't want to really get into what it would be like because I already have some ideas that I will someday have published by Warren.

G.A.S.: (To Vaughn) Is there any character by someone else that you'd like to draw?

VAUGHN: Yes, sure! When it's a really fine piece of work.

G.A.S.: For instance?

VAUGHN: Crumb's stuff. I really like so much of what he does. As a matter of fact, he's such a genius, y'know. He does it in pencil. He draws directly the way he draws. He just draws. Him and Dave Sheridan. He's an underground cartoonist. I'd really like to be able to draw his way, his characters, of course to paint like Bob Miginis. He's a cover painter. But as characters go, yeah, I guess it's those guys.

G.A.S.: (To Casey) There are different technics of writing comics. For instance, at Marvel they have a conference and at National they have a writen script, sometimes storyboards. How do you tell the artists what you want? How much control do you have?

CASEY: Well, I describe the way I want the panel to look, y'know. Sometimes the artist will depart from my suggestions to some extent and usually when that happens, I usually get mad. The one time that I didn't get mad was when Maroto did one of my stories and he did depart from my directions slightly at different points and I thought that made the panel look better. Maroto is a very talented artist. One of the best in the business.

G.A.S.: But how's it laid out? Storyboards or what?

CASEY: One a page. I say "Panel One, show this, so and so talking, this talking, caption," and so on down the average of six panels.

G.A.S.: Do you have a favorite comic book character, yours or somebody else's?

CASEY: My favorite comic book character, I think, is the one I call The Messenger of Death in A Stranger in Hell in Errie No. 38. That's my favorite character that I've created. My favorite comic book character of all time? Well, you're going back to the time when I was just a reader, not a writer. I liked Captain Marvel. I loved Man in Black. I was also very fond of Jet Powers, although that really wasn't a strip on the same level as Man in Black or Captain Marvel. For some reason or another I liked it. Back in the early 50's.

G.A.S.: Is there any strip you'd like to do but can't?

CASEY: I can't think of anybody else's strip that I would like to do, simply because I'm restricted by the fact that I have to do other people's characters the way they did them. I'm restricted by somebody else's whole set of characters. What I like to do in my stories, On The Wings of a Bird, my latest one our now, Climbers of The Tower, and so on, I like to be able to create a whole new world for each story, with my own set of characters with their own individual personalities, and make my point that way. Now when I have to have Pendragon in the story acting this way, Adam Van Helsing acting this way, and Conrad Van Helsing acting this way, it gets to be a real pain. I don't like that at all.

G.A.S.: (To Vaughn) What do you think of comics, say 20 or 30 years ago compared to today's.

VAUGHN: Betty Boop, you mean"

G.A.S.: Whatever you think of when you think of comics of those times.

©69 by VAUGHN BODE
SUCKER
I MUST POSSESS DAT ROCK!!
..LOOKIT, CHUB, I GOTS TO OWN DAT ROCK. I GOTS TO! YOUSE SAYS IT NOT FOR SALE BUT I THINKS I CAN CHANGE UP YOU FAT LITTLE MIND...

VAUGHN: Well, I liked a lot of them very much. Of course, we're all caught up in nostalgia and I guess that's what I like about them. I was just looking at some of them downstairs. Some of them that I didn't even remember that had big influence on me. Y'know, Captain Atom? Boy, I really forgot about that until I saw it. And I realized, "Wow! That was one of the things that started me drawing machines!" It was their awful machines. I think a lot of it is lousy, but a lot of it is really fantastic. I like Captain Marvel about the best really.

G.A.S.: (To Both) What are you working on now?

CASEY: I'm back to work for Warren.

VAUGHN: I'm preparing my lecture tours and continuing to work for Cavalier and the Playboy organization is considering a series by me as a matter of fact. It's considering Cheech Wizard for one of their magazines, so I'm just kinda waiting for that, but that's what I'm doing. That's enough.

G.A.S.: (To Vaughn) You speak of your work as satire but some of it seems a little too serious to be called satire, don't you think? Like Machines, for instance?

VAUGHN: Oh, sure! That is satire. Very serious. Satire is simply, I suppose, just a personal exposure of an attitude or of a condition, like war. A lot of people called me very violent, for instance for Cobalt Go. I designed Cobalt Go; most of the characters had never been seen by anybody. I've got like a hundred characters.

G.A.S.: (To Both) What are your goals in life?

CASEY: I wanna write plenty of comic books, that's my goal. I want to put down my whole philosophy of life in comic books, really.

I WILL GIVE YOU RICHES BEYOND YER MUNDANE SCOPE'S WILDEST DREAMS!... I WILL GIVE YOU DA TOP OF DIS MOUNTAIN CRAG, ALL DA AIR YOU CAN CARRY, AN DA CLOUD BANK!
[WHO DA' HELL GONNA RESIST A OFFER LIKE DAT... I MEAN DIS ONLY SOME ROCK I DONE PICKED UP]
OKAY. YOU HAS MADE YERSELF A DEAL BUDDY!!...

VAUGHN: Well, they're pretty heavy. Mostly, they're spiritual. And I'll be moving out further and further and further from the work that I'm doing now. And my whole trip is a very, very heavy one. And that's where I've been for a while. Ever since I was like with this boy guru. Really far out!

G.A.S.: (To Vaughn) In a lot of your work, you've had to write a lot of introductory material before you started the real story. Like that robot catalogue bit at the beginning of Machines. Does it ever bother you to have to do that much?

VAUGHN: No. You see, I approach these things as realities, and I've got like, you wouldn't believe how much unpublished stuff. I've got something that I'm going to be coming out with next year. It's called Klukerputch, which has listed in it like a hundred and thirty-five moons. It has like two hundred pages of fact wheets and designs. And that's never been published and that's for a character group that I haven't even worked with yet.

G.A.S.: There's a group of artists consisting of Jones, Kaluta, Writeson and a few others, where they've sort of influenced each other to the point where you could almost call them a school of art. Do you consider yourself part of that?

VAUGHN: Gee, that's hard to say. I guess so in certain ways. I don't know. I can't really answer that because we're all developing so fast.

G.A.S.: (To Casey) Marvel's been moving into horror stuff again and doing some pretty creative work as compared to most color horror comics. Do you think you might end up working for Marvel with these?

CASEY: No. I don't think so. I don't think that the Marvel horros comics are ever going to come close to the Warren horror comics anyway cause they're still restricted to a certain extent. They're restricted somewhat by the comic's code, in the first place. In the second place, they're restricted by the whole idea that goes with the color comics, that they're basicly for kids, and Warren is starting to put its books out for adults. That's where I wanna work.

G.A.S.: Have you ever done anything humorous?

CASEY: Yes, but they weren't very humorous; that's why you don't see many of them published. I've written all sorts of different things, all sorts of little magazines. I did a little minute mystery for a magazine called Puzzle Parade.

G.A.S.: Have you considered writing for the undergrounds?

CASEY: Yeah. I think I may try to get into that a little later on. I'm trying to put out an underground comic cook(with an

artist called Vince Martizono, if you happen to know of him, and we're getting together and we're going to try to put together a serious underground comic book. Without satire. It'll be something new. I don't know how eager underground publishers are going to be to use something like this. We'll have to wait and see.

G.A.S.: What would you think of working with Vaughn?

CASEY: I don't know. Could you do horror stuff, Vaughn?

VAUGHN: Some of the drawings that I did out of that set were horror things. And I had Warren like really want me to do horror work with a lot of people.

CASEY: Oh! That's right! It's too bad you didn't stay at Warren.

VAUGHN: Corben and I were going to be doing a lot of that stuff originally.

CASEY: Yeah, that's right. I forgot! With that cover and all that! Yeah, I think he could! I was thinking about his satirical work. Yeah. It's too bad that he didn't stick around. I remember Warren mentioning that they had a very good sale on the issue that he did the cover for. "Exceptionally good sale." As he put it.

G.A.S.: (To Both) Have you had any formal training in your fields?

VAUGHN: I have a Bachelor of Art's degree from Syracuse University. And I've had, of course, an awful lot of work.

CASEY: You're better off if you don't have any training in this field. In writing, you develop your own style.

G.A.S.: (To Vaughn) What would your advise be to someone trying to get into undergrounds.

VAUGHN: Well, in the undergrounds like I guess if they really wanna say something, then they should go in that direction. But, advice would be to do it, and not to stop, and not to give themselves those kind of goals, limit themselves.

G.A.S.: (To Casey) What's your advice to aspiring fan writers?

CASEY: Well, unless he lives in New York, he's gonna have quite a hard time trying to get published by color comics. His best bet would probably be to send his scripts in to Jim Warren or maybe to Skywald. I don't know whether Skywald needs writers right now or not, but I know when they do use them, they work

BELINDA
BUMP
VAUGHN
BODE
72'

through the mail. I guess Monster Times, and in the undergrounds, and maybe some of the better fanzines. I would recommend that. I think the better fanzines, the ones with high circulation, would do a good writer a lot of good. I didn't start out that way, but I think that it would do a young writer a lot of good, but that he's still not gonna get published by one of the big New York companies right off.

G.A.S.: Is there any Warren artist who you would particularly like to have do one of your stories?

CASEY: Again, as I said earlier, it depends on the story. Now my favorite of Spanish Artists is Esteban Maroto.

G.A.S.: Isn't everybody's. Of course, he's not doing as well as he did when he first came to Warren.

CASEY: Well, you see what's happened is that he's over-worked. It's because he's doing all this work. He's doing more work than you think he's doing. He's doing all these series. He's doing work for the new magazine. He's doing work for these Spanish publications. He must be doing ten or twenty pages a day from what we see of him, y'know? Just about. That's why you're losing a lot of detail. I like Maroto.

G.A.S.: Why doesn't Warren stop giving him so much work?

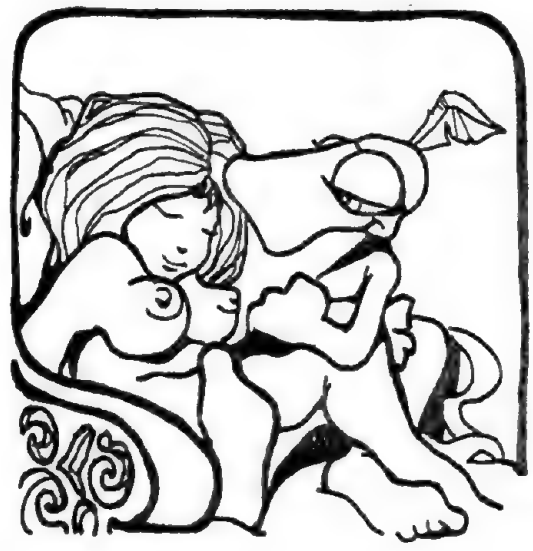
CASEY: Oh, yeah! I was talking about that to him. Warren agrees that Maroto is over-worked. And he says that he's going to under-work him a little while to get back that fantastic detail.

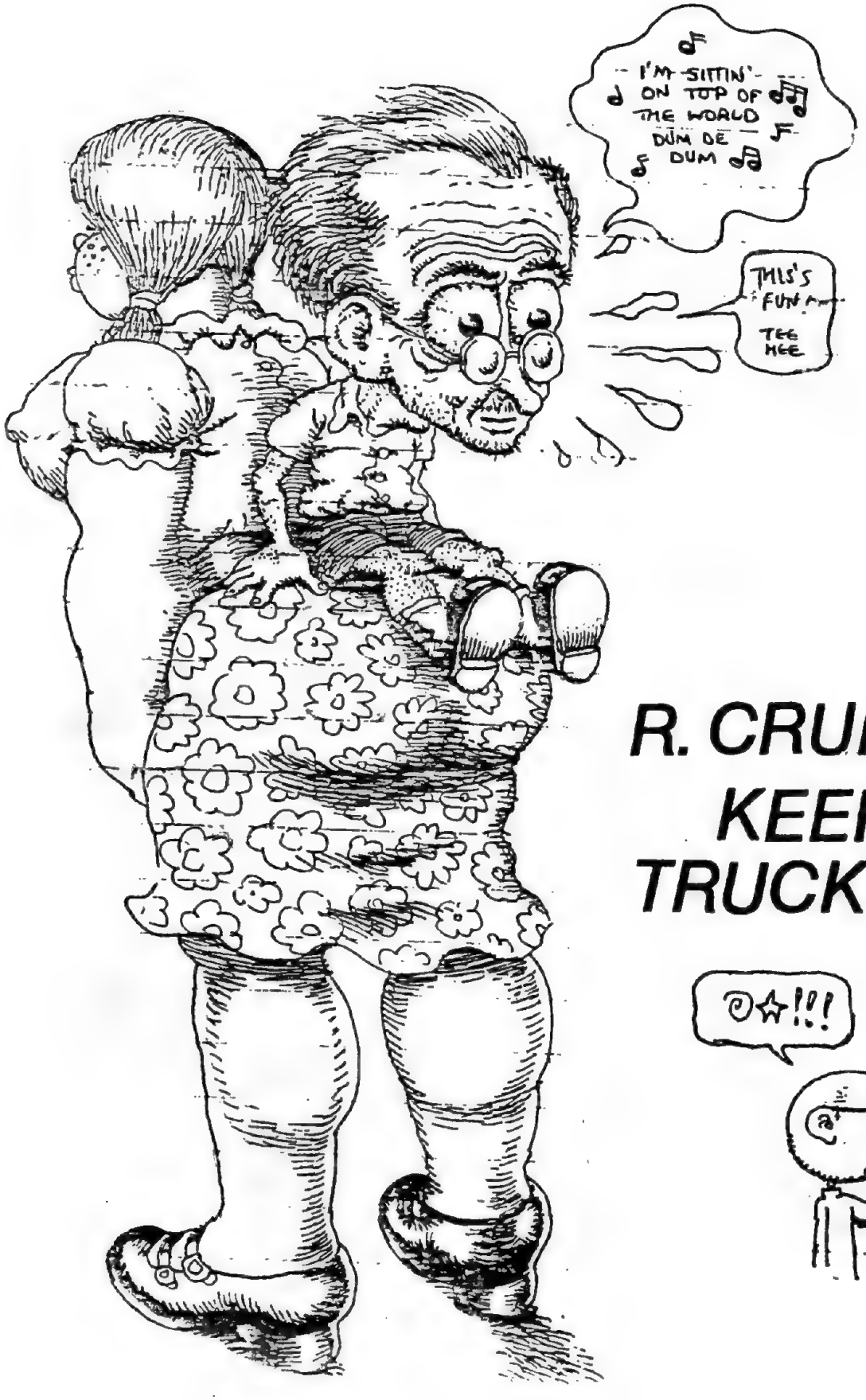
G.A.S.: (To Both) Is there anything you would like to say to finish off the interview?

CASEY: Yeah. I think that the most important thing I'd like to say is to thank my fans and my readers for all their support and for all the many, many letters that they've sent in to Warren Publications on my work, because I don't want to forget, it's the fans that have made my work popular, and if they continue to support me, my work is going to continue to be published whether if be by Warren or by whoever.

VAUGHN: Keep on trucking!

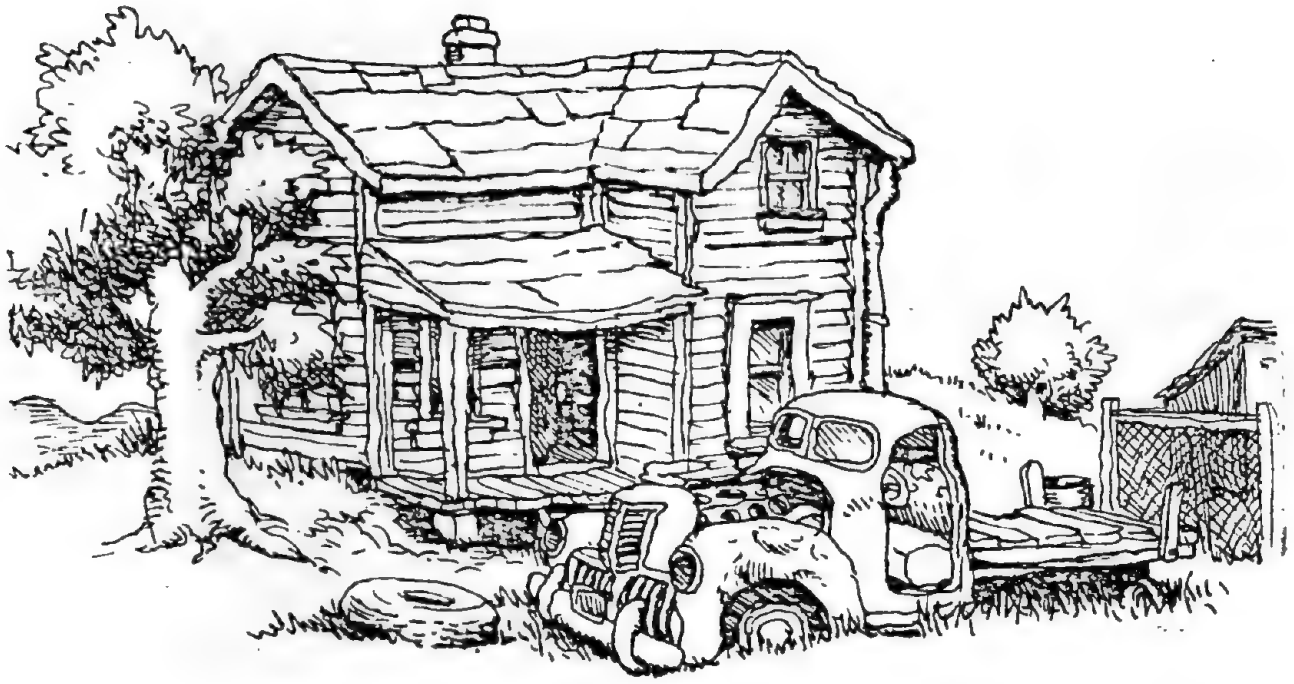
DA'
END

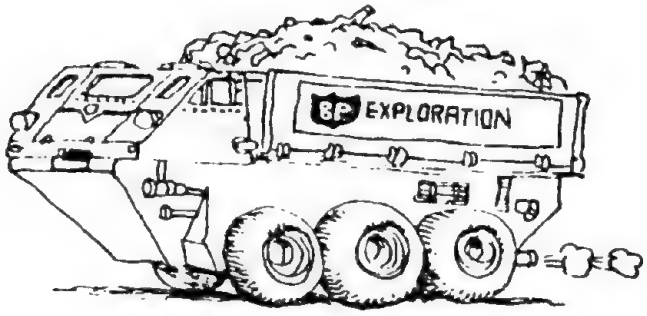




R. CRUMB KEEPS ON TRUCKIN'

PEOPLE REALLY GET TOUCHY WHEN Y'GIVE 'EM
THE FINGER!!
YOU FUCKIN ASSHOLE!
GRRRR
UP YOURS!
GIVE 'EM THE BIRD!
SIT ON THIS, MUTHUH!
EAT IT RAW!
STICK IT JACK!
KISS IT, ASSHOLE!
SMOOCH
LIFE IS MUCH COMPLICATED THAN I THOUGHT!





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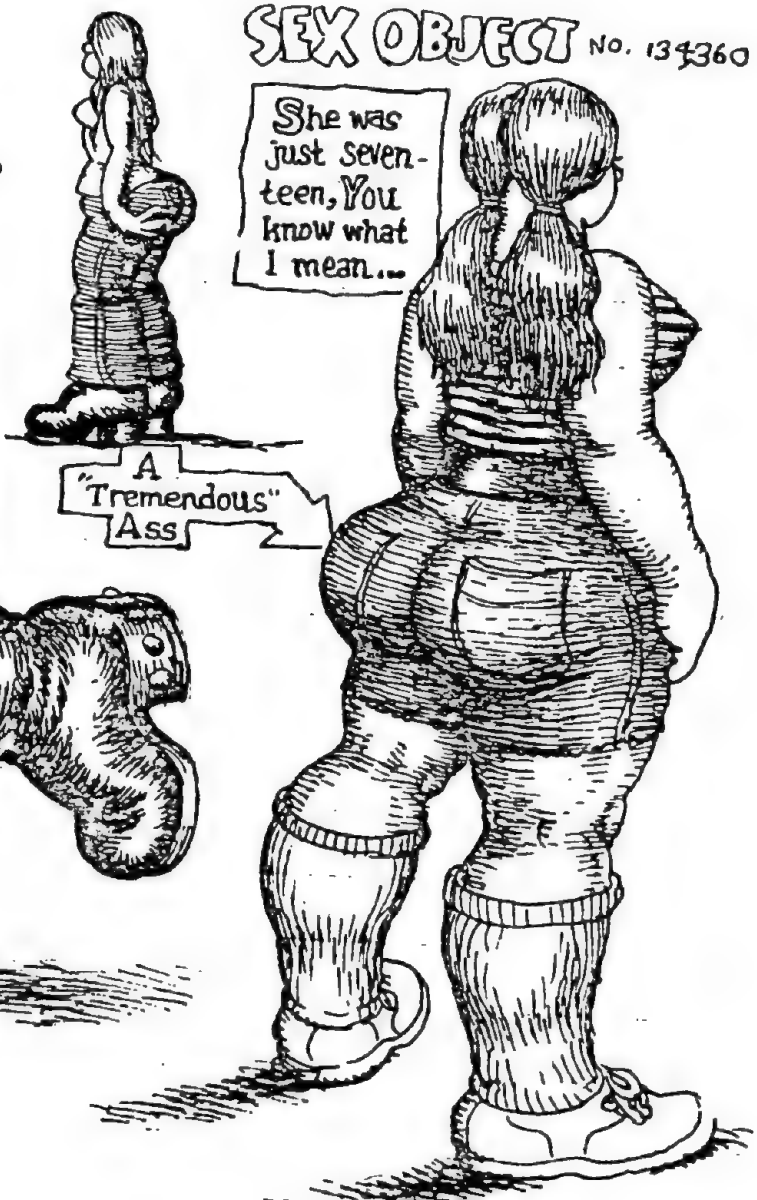


ISAAC ASIMOV INTERVIEW

G.A.S.: When did you start writing?

ASIMOV: When I was 11 years old. But not serious; just scribbling.

G.A.S.: Do you enjoy your work?

ASIMOV: Yes I do. Very much. Otherwise, would I do so much of it?

G.A.S.: Do you prefer to write fiction or nonfiction?

ASIMOV: I think I like writing nonfiction better, I'm sorry to say.

G.A.S.: Which of your books is your favorite?

ASIMOV: Of all the books, fiction or nonfiction, my favorite, I guess, was Asimov's Guide to Shakespeare.

G.A.S.: Who's your favorite writer?

ASIMOV: Me.

G.A.S.: What are you doing now?

ASIMOV: Oh, I'm writing a number of books. The main thing I'm doing now is writing a book of the History of North America and Military History of The World, and another on the planet Jupiter.

G.A.S.: What do you think of Harlen Elison?

ASIMOV: Oooh! As I say, he's five foot tow inches tall except when he opens his mouth wide, then he's five foot five.

G.A.S.: What do you read now"

ASIMOV: Well, mostly I read the books that I'm stealing from, but when I want to really just read for fun, I generally tend to read a murder mystery.

G.A.S.: What do you think of H. P. Lovecraft?

ASIMOV: Well, H. P. Lovecraft. The trouble with him, as far as I'm concerned, is that he has too much of the nameless horrors bit. I don't go for nameless horrors; I want them described.

G.A.S.: What do you think of science fiction movies?

ASIMOV: Well, they're written for a mass audience, and good science fiction can't possibly have a mass audience.

G.A.S.: What about Clockwork Orange?

ASIMOV: I haven't seen the Clockwork Orange and probably won't, because I'm afraid for my gentle and old fashioned soul, a little bit too violent. I'd sit there cringing.

G.A.S.: On one or two of your novels, the titles were changed under different publishers. Why?

ASIMOV: God knows! That's because publishers are stupid! The names are never changed when I have anything to say about it. They did on their own. Publishers are allowed to change titles if they want to.

G.A.S.: Did you intend to write more foundation stories than you did?

ASIMOV: Yes, I did, but I just wore out. I'd been working on it for eight years, and I just couldn't any more.

G.A.S.: Would you still consider finishing it up?

ASIMOV: No. I did that way back in the 1940's and I don't exist

in that form anymore. I'm sorry to say, if I tried to write it, it would be a great disappointment and it would go down as a sort of worthless epilogue which would please nobody.

G.A.S.: What do you think of the man who replaced Cambell on Analogues?

ASIMOV: He's an awfully bright buy and an awfully nice guy. He's a personal friend, and I think he's great. But a great deal depends on how many of the readers are simply going to be psychologically incapable of accepting him. And how many are going to miss Cambell's editorials which just infuriate me! I know they're great fun, but I used to get high blood pressure ulcers. Three paragraphs and I'd have to take to my bed. Of course, nobody can quite replace Cambell. Cambell was just one of a kind, and no matter how he tries, he can't be Cambell. No one can. So I'm hoping that he will succeed.

G.A.S.: Did you make any changes when you made the movie Fantastic Voyage into a book?

ASIMOV: No. I kept as closely as possible to the movie and just corrected some of their more outrageous errors.

G.A.S.: What inspired I Robot?

ASIMOV: Actually, discussions with John Cambell. I was writing robot stories, and as he and I talked together, we worked out the laws of robotics.

G.A.S.: Are you going to publish more in Analogue?

ASIMOV: Well, I certainly intend to submit stories to Analogue.

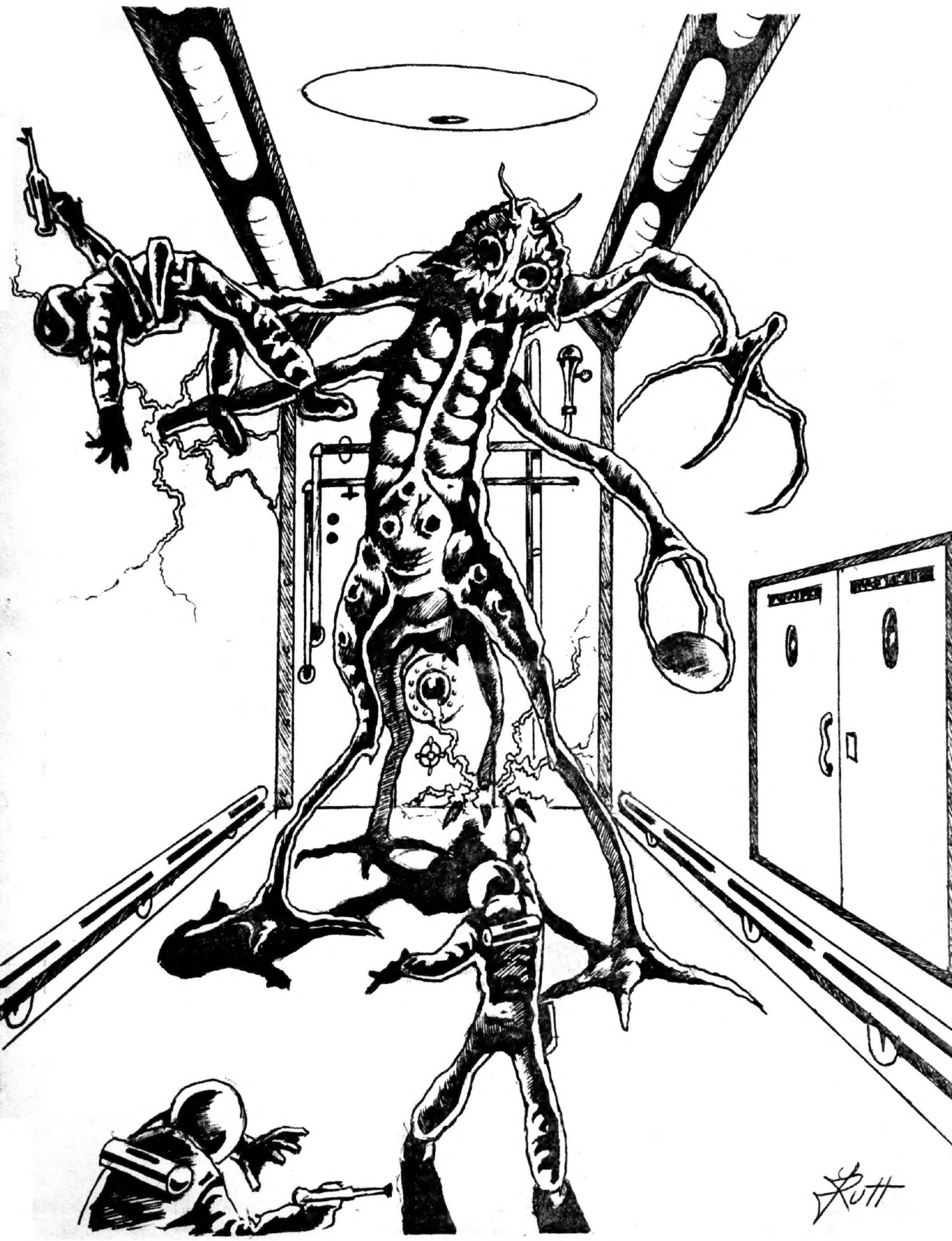
G.A.S.: Are you ever going to finish the Lije Baley Trilogy?

ASIMOV: I'm going to try to someday. I've been trying to now for fifteen years.

G.A.S.: Now that you've got another novel out, are you going to start writing science fiction in quantity again? Or are you going to keep us waiting some more?

ASIMOV: Oh, Gee! When you put it like that, I'll do my best!

THE END



By Seth Tobocman and Peter Kuper

EDITORIAL

Greetings fellow fans!

For those of you who have never heard of G.A.S.LITE before;G.A.S.LITE is a product of G.A.S. publications, publishers of MELOTOONS and other such stuff.

You may have noticed that this issue is rather l ng This is because it actualy contains four issues worth of material.You see,we had origionaly planned on making G.A.S.LITE a quarterly publication,however lack of time and involvement in numerous other projects forced us to go annual.So we took the best material planned for this years issues and put it all together in one.All false modesty aside,we think it came out very well.We hope you agree!

Congradulations to Tony Isabella,who started G.A.S.-LITE back in the sixties,on his new job at Marvel.You've come a long way baby!

We would like to thank the many people who helped make this issue possible individualy but we just don't have room.We're very grateful for everything they've done.

Sometime soon you should see an ad for a comic convention in Cleveland scheduled for sometime in · · st of 1973.Thats right friends!Fandom has finaly come to the mistake on the lake!See you there(or at the New York Comic Art convention).

Were sorry that Harvey Pekars article mentioned in our ad could not be used.It was too extensive to print in this issue which is already over sixty pages long.

We would enjoy hearing your opinion of this issue so keep those cards and letters coming.

Thank you for buying this issue.We hope you have enjoyed reading it as much as we did putting it out.

END

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